



the
bishop's
opening
explained

gary lane

The Bishop's Opening Explained

Gary Lane



BATSFORD

First published 2004

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ISBN 07134 8917 0

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Printed in Great Britain by
Creative Print and Design (Wales), Ebbw Vale

for the publishers

B.T. Batsford Ltd,
The Chrysalis Building
Bramley Road,
London, W10 6SP

www.chrysalisbooks.co.uk

An imprint of Chrysalis Books Group plc

Distributed in the United States and Canada by Sterling Publishing Co.,
387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, USA

For François Mertens

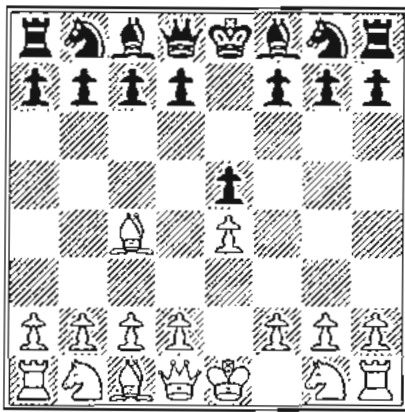
A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK

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Introduction

The Bishop's Opening occurs after 1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4



So White gets his opening on the board after just two moves and will be rewarded with sharp, attacking chances which require Black to defend accurately.

History

The opening has a long tradition, being mentioned by Luis Ramirez Lucena in a manuscript dated 1497. It then enjoyed popularity amongst the strongest players until they then moved on to other fashionable openings such as the King's Gambit and the Ruy Lopez. The modern treatment of the opening was shaped by Danish Grandmaster Bent Larsen who popularised the line in the 1960s and inspired a number of other leading players to adopt it.

And even to this day White continues to have success with the Bishop's Opening at all levels.

How The Games Were Selected

The initial idea was to update my 1993 book *Winning with the Bishop's Opening* but I soon realised this was not going to be so easy, not least of all because I originally wrote the book on an Amstrad word processor – which is now already a museum piece! – and lost the disks years ago. Therefore I decided to write a completely new book using my own experience of the line which I have played off and on since the age of 10. Though I have a bias towards White's chances I do believe the best way to learn the opening is to see what to do when the opponent goes wrong. There are many books which don't even mention standard tricks because they assume everyone knows them already but I will endeavour to point these out at every opportunity to make it easier for you to win quickly!

What to Play

I think one of most annoying things to have to cope with when

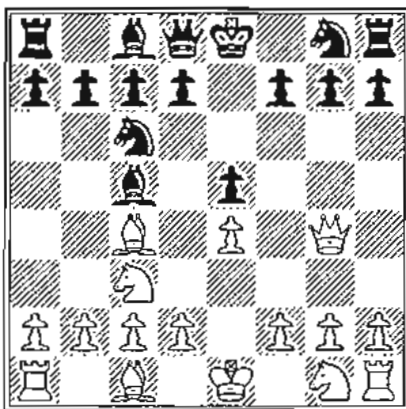
playing your favourite 1 e4 e5 opening is when the opponent becomes a copycat and just imitates the same moves as you! However, in the Bishop's Opening this can rapidly lead to a crisis for Black.

For example:

Nguyen Hoang Hiep – Hooi Ming Yew

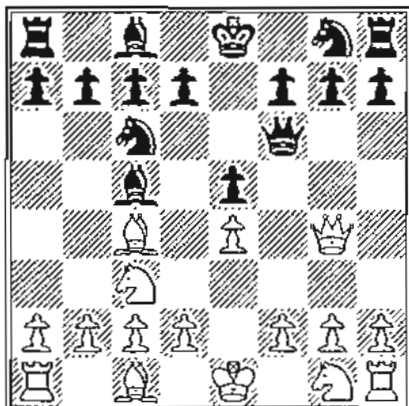
Asian Junior Championships 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗c5 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 ♗g4!



This certainly looks odd but here we have a special case where an early queen development is justified.

4...♗f6?!

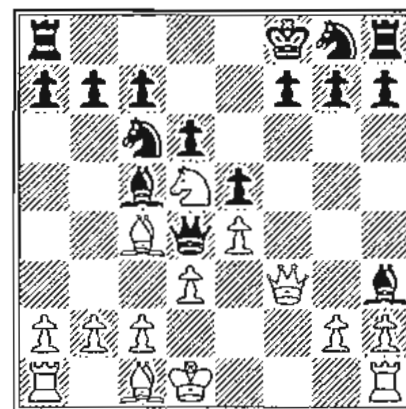


A classic mistake. Though Black defends the g7 pawn and threatens to start his own attack with ...♗xf2+, any well prepared player with the white pieces will now be able to force victory.

5 ♘d5!

The start of a brilliant attack that has been known for years but still continues to catch people out.

5...♗xf2+ 6 ♔d1 ♗f8 7 ♘h3 ♗d4 8 d3 d6 9 ♗f3 ♔xh3



10 ♖f1!

The rook comes across to the f-file and it finally dawns on Black that he is lost! The threat now is mate on f7 as well as the sly c2-c3 trapping the black queen in the middle of the board.

10...♔g4 11 ♗xg4 ♔b6 12 c3 ♗c5 13 ♔e3 ♗a5 14 ♘xb6 ♘f6 15 ♖xf6 1-0

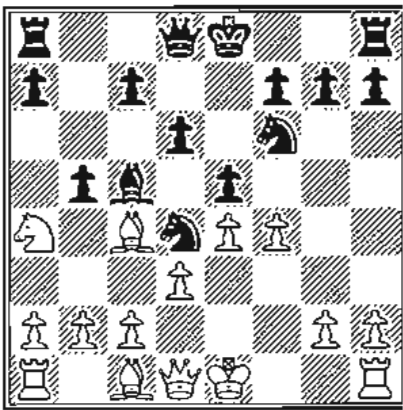
There are more details in the Vienna Copycat chapter.

I rather like the idea of using the Bishop's Opening to transpose to favourable lines of the Vienna which have brought me frequent success.

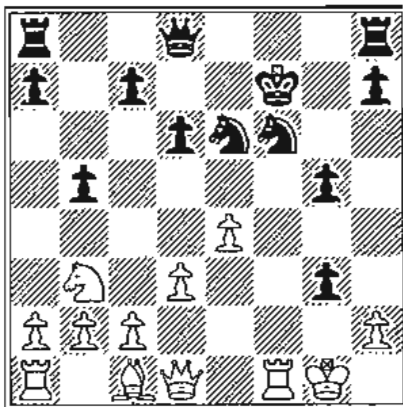
Lane – Jackson
British Championship 1989

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♟f6 3 d3 ♞c6 4
♞c3 ♙c5 5 f4 d6 6 ♞f3 ♙g4 7
♞a4 ♙xf3 8 ♚xf3 ♞d4 9 ♚d1 b5

Armed with prior knowledge you
will find many chances to attack.



10 ♙xf7+! ♚xf7 11 ♞xc5 exf4
12 ♞b3 ♞e6 13 0-0 g5 14 g3 fxg3



15 ♙xg5!

Black is busted

15...gxf2+ 16 ♚h1 ♞xg5 17
♚h5+ ♚e7 18 ♚xg5 ♜f8 19 ♞d4
♚e8 20 e5 dxe5 21 ♚xe5+ ♚d7 22
♚f5+ ♚d6 23 ♜ae1 1-0

A recent trend among strong
players is to use the Bishop's

Opening to avoid the dull, boring
Petroff which occurs after 1 e4 e5 2
♞f3 ♟f6 – which is why the game
Karjakin-Bologan Mainz 2004
started with:

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♟f6 3 d3 ♞c6 4
♞c3

Entering a position which is
discussed in the chapter 'Vienna
Options' and avoiding the necessity
of having to learn all that tedious
analysis associated with the Petroff.
So remember to play 2 ♙c4!

The chapter on the Closed Giuoco
Piano features a good selection of
steady and reliable lines for those
who prefer not to steer the battle
into a sharp middlegame. However,
even in these lines there are ways to
catch people out.



In this position from the game
Tishin-Geller, Samara 2002, White
played the fantastic 14 ♞h5! which
forces a positive exchange of pieces
greatly in White's favour. This is
because 14...♞xh5? allows 15 ♙g5
trapping the black queen while after
14...♚e7 15 ♙xf4 ♞xf4 16 ♞xf4
exf4 17 ♚d2 White remains with
the superior chances. If you can

remember such little niceties you can use them to your advantage.

In the next position, with the Black pieces, we have grandmaster Shabalov one of the most successful tournament players in the USA.

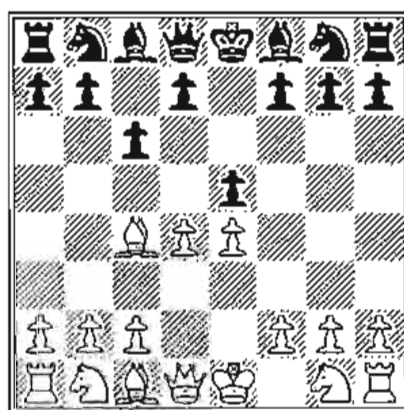


I suspect it didn't take you long to see how he came under considerable pressure in this game, against Flores in Buenos Aires 2003, when White unleashed **14 ♘h5!** on the board.

In this book I will cover all sorts of Black replies in order to convince you that **2 ♘c4** is indeed a viable weapon. I have even bowed to popular demand and added a couple of chapters on the romantic Evans Gambit which can be reached via the Bishop's Opening move-order **1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♘c6 3 ♖f3 ♘c5 4 b4**.

Also included is a chapter on various odd moves that Black might try for surprise value. I point out that **2...♘e7** actually loses a pawn after **3 ♖h5** and even offer some respectful comments about the

extraordinary **2...b5**, which just seems to lose a pawn for nothing. The best of the bunch occurs after **1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 c6** which occurred in Fedorov-Mamedyarov, Moscow 2004 when White replied **3 d4!** with the better chances.



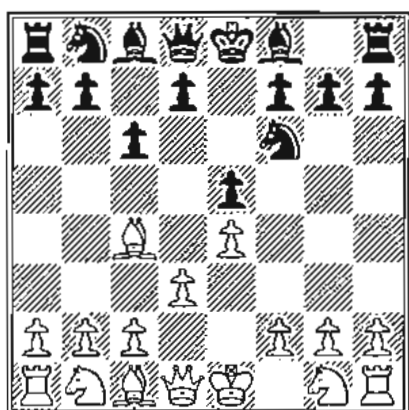
The point is that **3...exd4 4 ♖xd4** is fine for White since, compared to other lines, here there is no prospect of the queen being chased away by a knight emerging on c6, since that square is now occupied by a pawn!

Conclusion

The Bishop's Opening has a natural attraction for those with limited time to study. It avoids the fashionable Petroff Defence and the various transpositions can lure Black into unfamiliar territory. **2 ♘c4** offers a solid basis to conduct an attack and, with plenty of chances of a quick kill, It should appeal to everyone who aspires to play **1 e4** and win in style.

Paulsen Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♘f6 3 d3 c6



Black prepares to create a pawn centre with ...d7-d5, which will also reduce the effectiveness of the white bishop on c4. White's task is to contain the pawns and then seek to undermine them. 3...c6 is one of the most direct lines available for Black against the Bishop's Opening and has a reputation of being a sound defence although White usually enjoys some space advantage.

History

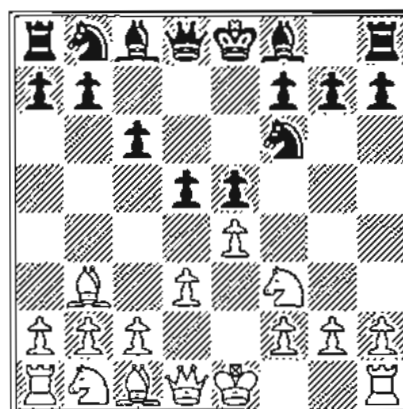
The name is borrowed from the German Louis Paulsen (1833-91) who was one of the world's best players in the 1860s and contributed much to the development of chess openings. In that era attention tended to focus on how White could

win quickly with a sparkling attack. He took a different view and proposed a number of defensive improvements for Black and indeed whole new systems, including the ...e6 Sicilian, which still bears his name to this day, and the Dragon variation. His recommendation against the Bishop's Opening should be equally respected – especially as it is still being played today at the highest level, for example by grandmasters Bacrot, Fressinet and Motylev who keep their faith in Paulsen's set-up.

White wins

Sikora Lerch – Klimus
Moravia Championship 1994

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♘f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♘f3
d5 5 ♗b3!?



A neat little move which is far from obvious and demonstrates true understanding and knowledge of the line. Not quite so accurate is to release the tension in the centre by 5 exd5 when play might continue 5...cxd5 6 ♖b3 ♖b4+ 7 c3 ♖d6 8 ♖g5 ♖e6 with equal chances.

5...♖g4

Black pins the king's knight and now threatens to win a pawn with 6...dxe4. Alternatively 5...dxe4 would be met by 6 ♖g5! hitting the f-pawn when play might continue 6...♖e6 7 ♖xe6 fxe6 8 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 9 dxe4 ♖xd1+ 10 ♔xd1 and which favours White in the long-term due to Black's doubled e-pawns.

6 ♖e2

6 ♖bd2 also seems reasonable.

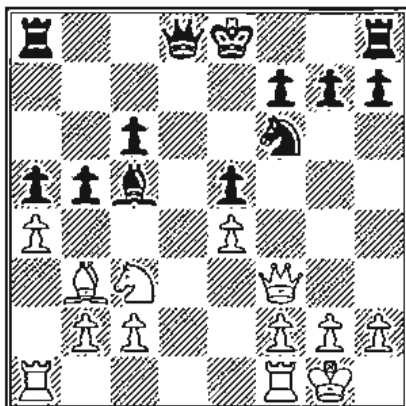
6...♖xf3 7 ♖xf3 dxe4!?

Black releases the tension in the centre because he wishes to develop the queen's knight to d7.

8 dxe4 ♖bd7 9 0-0 ♖c5 10 ♖c3 b5 11 ♖e3

White sensibly just gets on with the job of developing and hopes to create tactical chances before Black has time to castle.

11...a5 12 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 13 a4



13...♖d4?

It is necessary to try 13...b4 when 14 ♖ad1 ♖c7 15 ♖e2 is roughly equal.

14 axb5 ♖b6

It is not possible for Klimus to regain his pawn with 14...♖xc3 15 ♖xc3 cxb5 because then 16 ♖xe5+ wins for White.

15 bxc6 0-0

After 15...♖xc6 Black would be embarrassed by 16 ♖a4 pinning the queen.

16 ♖d5! ♖xd5

Or 16...♖xc6 17 ♖e7+ winning.

17 exd5 ♖xb2 18 ♖ab1 ♖d4 19 d6

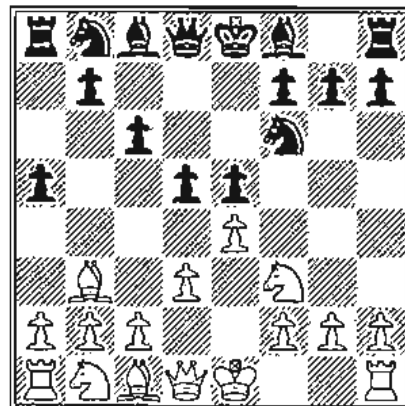
The two connected passed pawns are devastating for Black.

19...♖d8 20 ♖d5 a4 21 c7 ♖f6 22 ♖c4 1-0

I have faced the Paulsen Defence a few times and with some success:

Lane – Henris
Brussels 1995

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♖f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♖f3 d5 5 ♖b3 a5



Black decides to expand his pawns on the queenside – the initial threat is to trap the bishop with ...a5-a4.

6 a3

I like this move, which gives the bishop a little more room and rules out a future ...♗b4 by Black. Instead 6 ♖c3 ♗b4 (6...d4?! seems to win a piece but is exposed as a mistake by 7 ♖xe5! with a terrific attack after 7...dxc3 8 ♖xf7 and White well on top) 7 a3 ♗xc3+ 8 bxc3 ♖bd7 9 exd5 ♖xd5 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 c4 ♖e7 13 ♖g5 h6 14 ♖e4 a4 15 ♗a2 c5 (Black is aiming to block in White's light-squared bishop) 16 ♖d6 ♖f8 17 c3 led to a slight edge in Kasparov-Bareev, Linares 1993.

6...a4

Black nudges the bishop into the corner. The main alternative, 6...♗d6, to secure the e5 pawn, is similar to the main game after 7 ♖c3:

a) 7...d4 8 ♖e2 a4 9 ♗a2 0-0 10 h3 (or 10 0-0 ♗d7 11 ♖exd4!? exd4 12 e5 with roughly equal play) 10...♖bd7 11 0-0 ♖c5 12 ♖d2 ♗e6 13 ♖c4 ♗c7 14 f4 exf4 15 ♗xf4 b5 16 ♖e5 led to equal chances in Lendwai-Benda, Hartberg 2004.

b) 7...♗e6 8 exd5 ♗xd5 9 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖d7 12 d4 ♖e8 13 ♗g5 ♖c7 14 c4 ♖f4 15 c5 ♗e7 and now, instead of 16 ♖c2, played in the game Zhelin-Raetsky, Smolensk 2000 which is quoted in many sources, White can spring a surprise with the startling 16 ♗xf7+

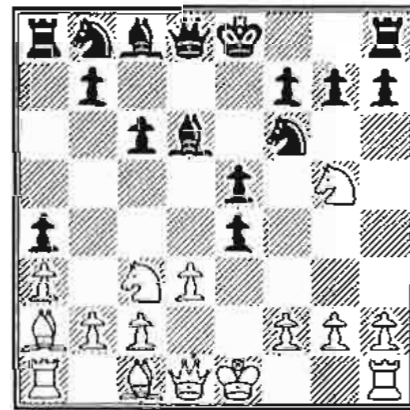
when 16...♗xf7 17 ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 18 ♗xf4 achieves a winning advantage.

c) 7...dxe4 8 ♖g5 (an echo of the main game) 8...0-0 9 ♖cxe4 ♖xe4 10 ♖xe4 ♗f5 11 ♖f3 with a slight edge.

7 ♗a2 ♗d6 8 ♖c3 dxe4

This has the merit of preventing White from constantly trying to undermine the pawn centre but it does increase the influence of the bishop on a2. Or 8...♗e6 9 0-0 dxe4 10 dxe4 ♗xa2 11 ♖xa2 (the rook is temporarily misplaced here but will later simply be moved back to a1 in order to co-ordinate with the rest of the pieces) 11...0-0 12 ♗g5 ♖e7 13 ♖h4 ♖e6 14 ♖f3 ♖bd7 15 ♖f5 with a slight edge due to the influential king's knight, Moreno Ruiz - Mellado Trivino, Torrevieja 1997.

9 ♖g5



This is a direct way of causing Black some problems in the opening. I tried 9 dxe4 in a game against English grandmaster Sadler in London 1994, but was unable to make an impact against a stout defence. The continuation was 9...♖e7 10 0-0 ♗e6 11 ♖h4 g6 (a

good move to block out the knight, though at the time I felt this was a concession because it weakens his kingside dark-squares – but they are not easy to exploit) 12 h3 (12 ♖h6 is met by 12...♗g4! 13 ♖xe6 ♗xh6 14 ♖a2 0-0 with equal chances) 12...♖xa2 13 ♖xa2 ♗bd7 14 ♖a1 ♗c5 15 ♖e1 0-0 16 ♖g5 ♖g7 with roughly equal chances – a draw was agreed after 44 moves.

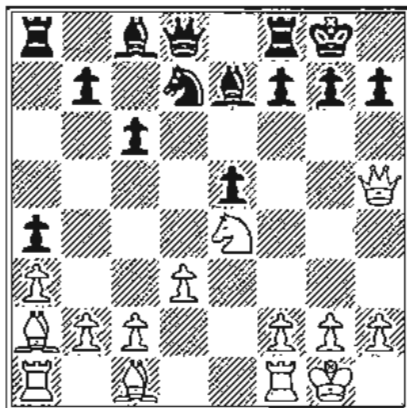
9...0-0 10 ♗gxe4 ♗xe4

If Black dawdles by retreating the bishop from the central knight's reach with 10...♖c7 then 11 ♖g5 ♗bd7 12 ♖f3 gives White a degree of pressure due to the pin.

11 ♗xe4 ♖e7

A defensive measure which is not in keeping with the usual aggressive style of Henris but he has little choice because Black has no obvious counterplay. If 11...♖c7 then 12 ♖h5 and the queen is handily placed for the attack. Then 12...h6? would be a disaster due to 13 ♖xh6 gxh6 14 ♖g6+ ♖h8 15 ♖xh6+ ♖g8 16 ♗f6+ and Black can make his way home.

12 ♖h5 ♗d7 13 0-0



I wanted to get the king into safety and at the same time bring the king's rook into the game by means of f2-f4.

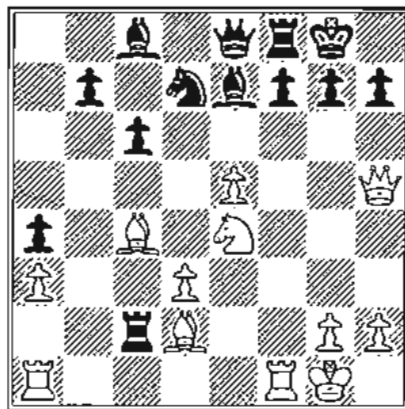
13...♖e8

After the game the Belgian international indicated that his aim was to add some weight to the defence of the f7 pawn and prepare ...f7-f5 to exchange queens.

14 f4 ♖a5 15 ♖d2 ♖b5 16 ♖c4!

I wanted to deflect the rook away from the fifth rank so I could take on e5 without having to contend with ...♖xe5.

16...♖xb2 17 fxg5 ♖xc2



18 ♖xf7!

The breakthrough sacrifice which spells doom and gloom for Black.

18...♖xc4

Probably 18...♖xf7 is the best chance although 19 e6 ♖xc4 20 exf7+ ♖xf7 21 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 22 dxc4 gives White a good ending.

19 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 20 dxc4

A quick look at the position indicates that White is the exchange up and the attack is still raging.

20...g6 21 ♖e2 ♜xe5 22 ♙c3

Black has grabbed a pawn back but at the cost of rewarding White with strong play on the a1-h8 diagonal.

22...♙g4

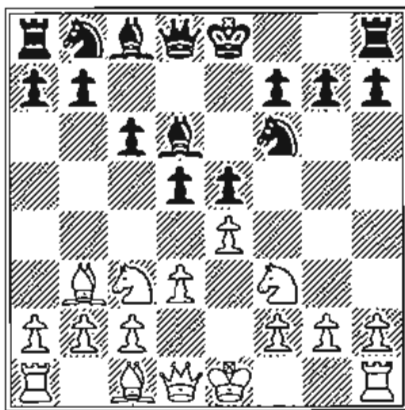
Or 22...♞d7 23 ♜f1 ♖e8 24 ♞d6 winning.

23 ♖e3 ♖f5? 24 ♞g3 1-0

One of my main inspirations for playing the Bishop's Opening was the fact that English grandmaster John Nunn frequently used it with success.

Nunn – Murey Luzern Olympiad 1982

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♞f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♞f3
d5 5 ♙b3!? ♙d6 6 ♞c3



If White is looking for an alternative then a pawn exchange in the centre comes to mind: 6 exd5 cxd5 (or 6...♞xd5 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♜e1 ♞d7 9 d4 [White tries to create complications] 9...exd4 10 ♙xd5 cxd5 11 ♖xd4 ♙c5 12 ♖xd5 ♖b6 13 ♜e2 ♞f6 14 ♖b3 ♖a6 gave Black sufficient compensation for

the pawn in Tiviakov-Stefanova, Wijk aan Zee 2004) 7 ♙g5 ♞c6 8 0-0 (8 ♙xd5? is well met by 8...♖a5+ 9 ♞c3 ♞xd5 winning) 8...d4 9 ♜e1 0-0 10 ♞bd2 ♜e8 with equal chances, Hamdouchi-Bacrot, Paris 2002.

6...♙e6

Black maintains his centre by lending support to the d5 pawn. Also possible is 6...d4 7 ♞e2 ♞a6 8 c3 (White wants to undermine the pawn chain and make room for his light-squared bishop) 8...dxc3 9 bxc3 0-0 10 0-0 ♞c5 11 ♙c2 ♙g4 12 ♞g3 ♞h5 13 h3 ♞xg3 14 fxg3 ♙h5 with roughly equal chances, as in Nunn-Korchnoi, Johannesburg 1981. 6...dxe4 is examined in the main game Degraeve-Meijers.

7 ♙g5 ♖a5 8 0-0

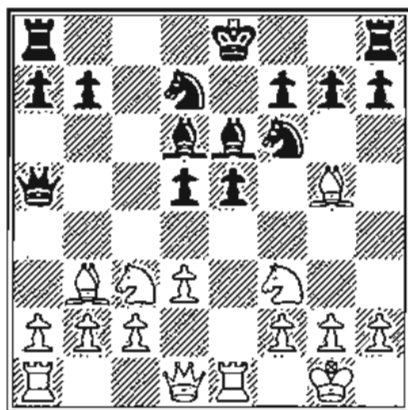
A patient approach with Nunn removing the pin on the queen's knight by whisking the king to safety. Instead 8 ♙xf6 doubles the f-pawns but, with Black planning to castle queenside, it means that the open g-file can be used for attack. For instance: 8...gxf6 9 0-0 ♜g8 (9...♞d7 10 d4 is equal) 10 ♞h4 ♙g4! is slightly better for Black.

8...♞bd7 9 exd5

I have tried 9 ♜e1 and it proved to be a good idea in the game Lane-Pergericht, Brussels 1990: 9...0-0-0 10 d4 exd4 11 ♞xd4 ♙g4 12 ♖d2 dxe4?! (this grants White an attacking initiative) 13 ♞xe4 ♙c7 (13...♙b4!? is better but after 14 c3 ♙e7 15 ♖f4 White is on top) 14 ♞d6+! ♖b8 15 ♞xf7 h6 16 ♙f4 1-0.

9...cxd5

If 9... cxd5 ?! Black no longer has a decent pawn centre and 10 dxe4 c7 11 cxd2 a6 12 d5 is terrific for White.

10 e1 

10...0-0

An important alternative is 10...0-0-0 which used to be praised in older sources but was shown to be weak in a number of correspondence games. After 11 d2 we have:

a) 11... b4 12 a3 xc3 13 xc3+ xc3 14 bxc3 h6 15 h4 g5 16 g3 e4 17 d4 with a slight edge, Koch-Mohaupt, Correspondence 1964.

b) 11... b6 12 xf6 xf6 13 xe5 d4 14 xe6+ fxe6 15 c4 xh2+ 16 xh2 c7+ 17 g1 dxc3 18 xc3 with a clear advantage, Koch-Llorens, Correspondence 1964.

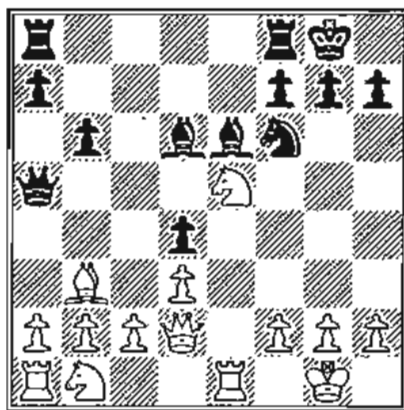
c) 11... b8 12 xf6 gxf6 13 xd5 is simply good for White thanks to the extra pawn, Koch-Krajkowski, Correspondence 1964.

d) 11... c7 12 xf6 gxf6 13 xd5 ! xd5 14 b4 xb4 15 xd5 xd2 16 xd2 a5 17 e2 gave White an edge due to his superior pawn formation in Koch-Muller, Correspondence 1964.

11 d2 b6 ?!

It seems to make sense to support the queen so that any tricks that White may have by moving the queen's knight are made redundant. However I prefer 11... d4 ?! 12 b1 (12 e4 ? has been played but Black should pounce with 12... b4 ! when 13 c3 xe4 14 cxb4 xd2 15 bxa5 xf3+ 16 gxf3 xb3 17 axb3 f6 leaves White's pawns looking silly) 12... xd2 13 bxd2 with equal play.

12 xf6 xf6 13 xe5 d4 14 b1

14... b4

On the chessboard Murey is a street-fighter and so, far from exchanging queens, here he heads for complications. If 14... xe5 15 xa5 bxa5 16 xe5 leaves White a pawn up, while 14... c5 15 f3 h5 ?! 16 xe6 fxe6 17 xe6 is good for White.

15 c3 ♖xb3 16 cxb4 ♗a6 17 b5
 ♗a4 18 ♘a3 ♙d5 19 ♜ec1 ♞ac8

Black has to be wary of 19...♜fe8? because 20 ♘ec4 means that Black has to worry about his queen being trapped: 20...♙xc4 21 ♞xc4 ♗a5 22 ♗xa5 bxa5 23 ♞xd4 with a winning ending.

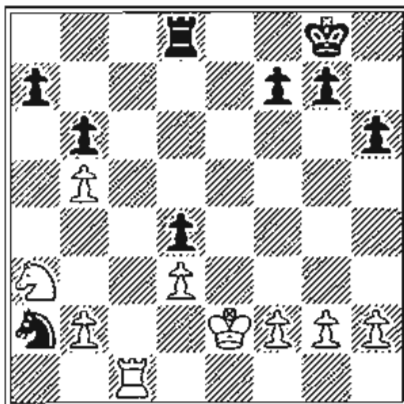
20 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 21 ♘ec4 ♙xc4 22 ♘xc4 ♞d8

Of course 22...♗xb5? is just daft in view of 23 ♘d6 winning.

23 ♘a3 ♙d5 24 ♖f1 h6 25 ♞c1
 ♗b4

25...♖f8 allows the decisive 26 ♞c4! ♗a5 27 ♗xa5 bxa5 28 ♞xd4.

26 ♗xb4 ♘xb4 27 ♖e2 ♘xa2



28 ♞c4

Nunn has allowed Black to steal a pawn but the fact that his knight is now cut off from the game leads to swift punishment. Admittedly, 28 ♞c7 also looks good.

28...♞d5 29 ♖d2 ♖f8 30 ♞a4
 ♞g5

If 30...♞d7 then 31 ♘c2 reminds Black that the knight has no safe squares.

31 g3 ♞f5 32 f4 g5 33 ♘c4 gxf4

A desperate situation but Black is obviously a believer in the old dictum that no one ever won a game of chess by resigning. Then again, against the English grandmaster it might just have saved him a little time:

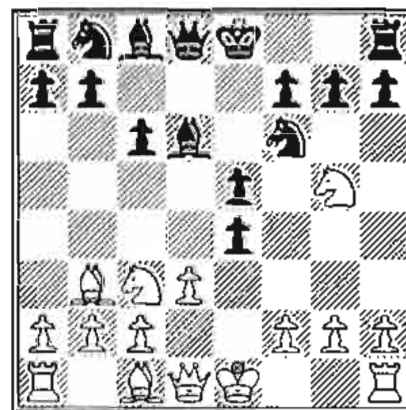
34 ♞xa2 ♞h5 35 gxf4 ♞xh2+ 36 ♖e1 h5 37 ♞xa7 h4 38 ♖f1 ♖g8 39 ♞d7 ♞h3 40 ♞xd4 ♞g3 41 ♖f2 1-0

It is worth knowing what to do when Black decides to exchange pawns in the centre. The key move 7 ♘g5 should be a familiar idea from the game Lane-Henris where 9 ♘g5 also kept queens on the board for the middlegame so an attack could be launched.

Degraeve - Meijers St Affrique 2003

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♘f3
 d5 5 ♙b3 ♙d6 6 ♘c3 dxe4

Black wishes to simplify matters.
 7 ♘g5



This is the right way to strive for the advantage because White attacks f7 and will keep tactical possibilities alive by recapturing the pawn on e4

with a knight. 7 dxe4 is the obvious move but Black has instant equality by 7...♘a6 8 ♖g5 h6 9 ♗xf6 ♜xf6 10 h3 ♘c5 11 0-0 g5 12 ♘d2 h5 13 ♜f3 ♜g6 as in Heinemann-Raetsky, Erfurt 1993.

7...0-0 8 ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4

9 dxe4 is fine for Black. After 9...♗b4+ 10 c3 (10 ♗d2? would bring a smile to Black's face upon 10...♜xg5) 10...♜xd1+ 11 ♔xd1 ♗c5 the position is level.

9...♗e7?!

Meijers retreats the bishop to forestall any intentions of a white knight hopping to the g5 square.

Others:

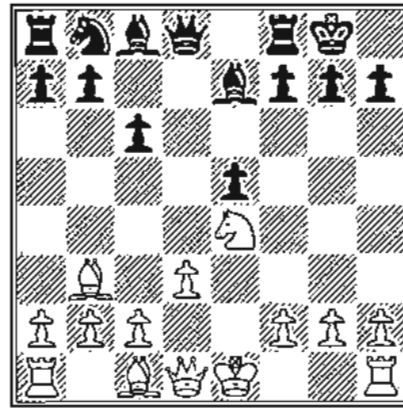
a) 9...♗b4+ has the idea of forcing White into a concession before returning the bishop to e7 but it not clear that it is significant. 10 c3 ♗e7 11 f4 exf4 12 ♗xf4 ♘d7 13 ♜f3 ♘f6 (perhaps 13...a5!? should be considered) 14 0-0 ♘xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♗f6 16 ♗e5 ♜e7? 17 ♗xf6 ♜xe4 18 dxe4 gxf6 19 ♜xf6 gave White a clear advantage in Stefansson-Krush, Reykjavik 2004;

b) 9...♗f5!? looks to be the best try and now:

b1) 10 0-0 ♘a6 11 ♘xd6 ♜xd6 12 f4 (12 ♜f3 is also possible) 12...♘c5 13 fxe5 ♜d4+ 14 ♔h1 ♘xb3 15 axb3 ♜xe5 16 ♜h5 ♜fe8 17 ♗d2 when a draw was soon agreed, Al Sayed-Dutreeuw, Bled Olympiad 2002.

b2) 10 ♜f3 ♗xe4 (10...♗g6 is met by 11 h4 with decent attacking chances) 11 dxe4 ♘d7 12 c3 a5 13 a3 (or 13 a4 ♘c5 14 ♗c2 b5!? 15

0-0 ♜c7 16 ♜d1 with roughly equal chances, Adams-Kramnik, Tilburg 1998) 13...a4 14 ♗a2 ♜e7 15 0-0 ♗c5 16 ♗d2 ♜ad8 17 ♜ad1 when White is hoping to exploit the pair of bishops but with accurate play the position is level, Jaracz-Bacrot, Istanbul 2003.



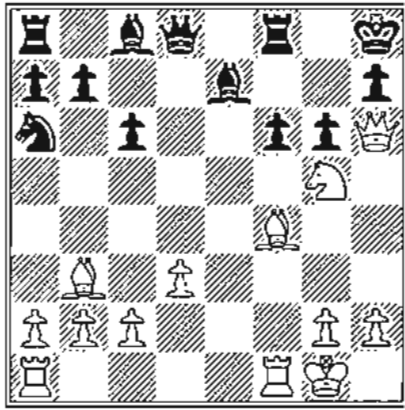
10 0-0

A sensible choice. White makes sure his king is safe before contemplating an attack. Instead 10 ♜h5! immediately looks promising because it stops Black from developing a bishop to f5. For example: 10...♘d7 (10...♔h8 11 0-0 ♜c7 12 ♗g5 ♗xg5 13 ♜xg5 ♘b6 14 f4 exf4 15 ♜xf4 ♘d5 (15...♗d7? walks into 16 ♘f6+ ♔h8 17 ♜h4 h6 18 ♜xh6+ gxh6 19 ♜xh6 mate) 16 ♗xd5 cxd5 17 ♘f6+ ♔h8 18 ♘xd5 ♜xc2 19 ♜xf7! ♜g8 (19...♜xf7 20 ♜d8+ ♜f8 21 ♜xf8 mate) 20 ♘e7 1-0 Vorobiov-Belukhin, Pardubice 2002.

10...♔h8 11 ♜h5 f6 12 f4

A standard idea for White in this line which enables the king's rook to join in the battle.

12...g6 13 ♖h6 exf4 14 ♙xf4
 ♜a6 15 ♜g5!



The Frenchman is renowned for his attacking flair so it is no surprise he spots a dangerous continuation.

15...fxg5

If Black tries to cover the e5 square with 15...♗d4+ it fails to impress after 16 ♖h1 fxg5 17 ♙e5+ ♗xe5 18 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 19 ♗xf8 mate.

16 ♙e5+ ♖f6

If 16...♙f6 then 17 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♖f1 is decisive.

17 ♖xf6 ♙xf6 18 ♗xg5! ♖g7

18...♗b6+ 19 ♖h1 ♙g7 allows a pretty finish by 20 ♗f6 ♗c7 21 ♗f8 mate.

19 ♖f1 h6

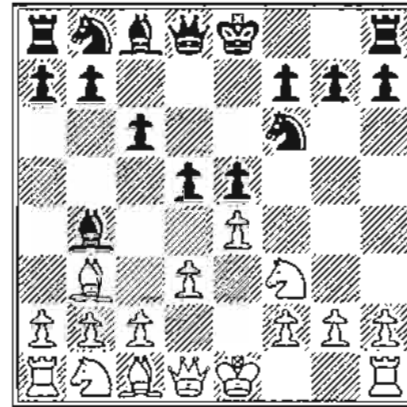
19...♗b6+ looks desperate and does not alter the final result upon 20 ♖h1 ♙xe5 21 ♖f7+ ♖g8 22 ♖d7+ ♖f8 23 ♗e7 mate.

20 ♙xf6+ ♖h7 21 ♗e3 1-0

A refined approach by Black is to insert 5...♙b4+ as an annoying check so that it disrupts White's usual set-up.

Vogt – Romanishin
 Riga 1981

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♜f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♜f3
 d5 5 ♙b3 ♙b4+



6 ♙d2

White offers an exchange of bishops in the name of quick development and so that he can undermine Black's pawn centre. Blocking with the c-pawn leaves Black happy in the knowledge that he has at least temporarily prevented ♜c3, e.g. 6 c3 ♙d6 7 ♙g5 dxe4 8 dxe4 and now:

a) 8...♜a6 9 ♜bd2 ♙c7 10 ♙c2 ♜c5 11 0-0 0-0 12 h3 with roughly equal chances, Magem Badals - Koch, French Team Championship 2000.

b) 8...♗e7 9 ♜bd2 ♙c7 10 0-0 ♜a6 11 ♜c4 ♜c5 12 ♙c2 0-0 13 ♖e1 again with equality, Bauer-Koch, Narbonne 1997.

c) 8...h6 9 ♙h4 ♗e7 10 ♜bd2 ♙c7 11 ♗e2 ♜a6 12 h3 ♜c5 13 g4?! (ambitious because 13 0-0 is a superior choice offering equal chances) 13...a5 14 ♙c2 a4 15 ♜f1 a3 16 b4 ♜e6 17 ♙g3 ♜f4 18 ♙xf4 exf4 19 ♜ld2 ♙e5 gave Black the

initiative in Hendriks-Bosboom, Leeuwarden 2004.

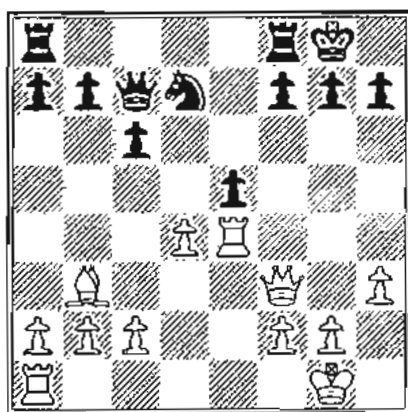
6...♙xd2+ 7 ♘bxd2 ♖c7

Instead 7...♙g4, encouraging exchanges, is one way to avoid complications, for example: 8 h3 ♙xf3 (8...♙h5? 9 g4 ♙g6 10 ♘xe5 dxe4 11 ♘xg6 hxg6 12 dxe4 gives White an extra pawn) 9 ♖xf3 0-0 10 0-0 ♗a5 11 c3 ♘bd7 12 ♖fe1 with level chances. The point is that Black has relieved the pressure on the central pawns although White would argue that the bishop is still doing a good job of maintaining the tension.

8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖e1 ♙g4 10 h3 ♙xf3

Romanishin is obliged to take the knight because 10...♙h5? allows White to win a pawn by 11 exd5 cxd5 (11...♙xf3 12 ♖xf3 cxd5 13 ♙xd5 is good for White) 12 g4 ♙g6 13 ♘xe5 etc.

11 ♖xf3 dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♖xe4 ♘d7 14 d4!



White increases the pressure by challenging the e5 pawn and at the same time cutting out the prospect of ...♘c5.

14...exd4

If Black chooses to resist the pressure on the f7 pawn by tucking the king away into the corner with 14...♖h8 then 15 ♖ae1 f5 16 ♖h4! is tricky for Black because of the threat 17 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 18 ♗h5 mate.

15 ♖e7 ♖d6 16 ♖ae1 ♖h8

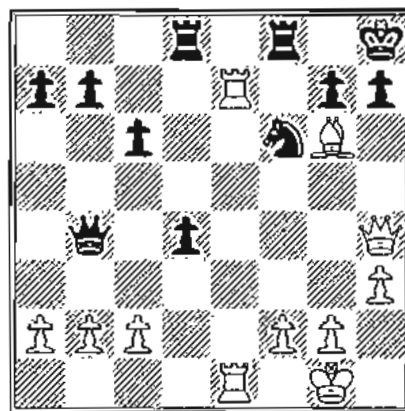
If 16...♘f6 then 17 ♖xb7 maintains the pressure against f7 after which the plan will be to bring the other rook to the seventh rank.

17 ♙xf7 ♖ad8 18 ♖g4

The idea is to try to create mating threats against g7 after removing the bishop from f7.

18...♘f6 19 ♖h4 ♖b4 20 ♙g6

Instead 20 ♖le6 is worth considering. For instance: 20...♖d6 21 c3! (this precise move tips the scales in favour of White) 21...♖c5 (21...dxc3?? allows 22 ♖xb4 winning) 22 ♖e5 ♖b6 23 ♙b3 dxc3 24 bxc3 with excellent attacking chances for White.



20...♖d7

Instead 20...♖xb2 is the obvious move but walks into the superb sacrifice 21 ♖xg7! which allows

White to win after 21...♔xg7 22 ♖c7+ ♔xg6 23 ♖g3+ ♔h6 24 ♖g7+ ♔h5 25 ♖e5+ ♔h4 26 ♖g5 mate.

21 ♖e8 ♖d8 22 c3 ♖dx8

Black keeps on finding accurate moves to stay in the game.

If 22...♖xb2 then 23 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 24 ♔xh7! (a nice little trick which leaves the black king exposed) 24...♖d2 25 ♔f5+ ♖h6 26 ♖xh6+ gxh6 27 cxd4 ♖xd4 28 ♖e6 ♔g8 29 ♖c8 ♔g7 30 ♔e6 ♔f6 31 ♖e7+ ♔g6 32 ♖xb7 gives White a winning ending.

23 ♖xe8 ♖d6 24 ♖xf8+

At first glance 24 ♖xd4??, to deflect the black queen away from the defence of the rooks, seems a good idea – until you see 24...♔xe8 leaving White looking silly.

24...♖xf8 25 cxd4 ♖b4 26 b3 ♖d2 27 ♔f5

Or 27 ♔f7!? ♖xa2 28 ♖f4 when White has all the chances.

27...♖xa2?!

This allows White to gain the initiative. Perhaps Black should prefer 27...c5 28 ♖g3 (28 dxc5 ♖e1+ 29 ♔h2 ♖e5+ 30 ♖g3 ♖xf5 is better for Black) 28...cxd4 29 ♖b8+ ♔g8 and now 30 ♔h2! gives White decent chances because he has avoided a perpetual check.

28 ♖g3 ♖e2 29 ♖b8+ ♖e8 30 ♖xb7 g6 31 ♔d3 a5 32 ♔f1 ♖d8?!

Black is in trouble but should hang on to his c-pawn which obliges White to take great care in realising the win.

33 ♖xc6 ♖xd4 34 ♖a8+ ♔g7 35 ♖xa5

This position is a standard win for a top player because he can usher the b-pawn forward. If Black does set up a blockade then White will advance his pawns on the kingside to create a mating net.

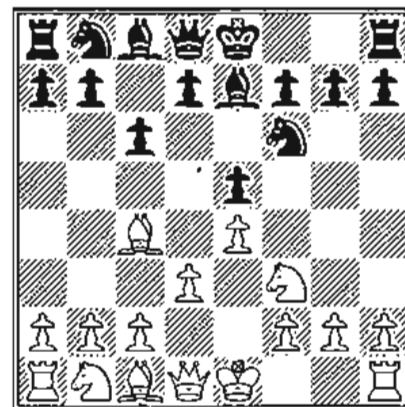
35...♔e4 36 ♖e1 h5 37 ♖e3 ♖b4 38 ♔c4 ♔f6 39 ♖e5 ♖b6 40 g3 ♔h6 41 ♖e3+ 1-0

Garry Kasparov has to deal with a passive version of the Paulsen Defence where Black protects his e-pawn with ...d7-d6 and intends to carefully develop his pieces. The space advantage White consequently enjoys is then accurately exploited by the Russian superstar.

Kasparov – Georgadze

USSR Championship, Minsk 1979

1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 ♔f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♔f3 ♔e7



5 0-0

Yes, 5 ♔xe5?? is seen sometimes whereupon 5...♖a5+ wins a piece.

5...d6 6 c3 0-0

The original move-order was 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♙c4 ♙e7 4 d3 ♘f6 5 c3 0-0 6 0-0 c6.

7 ♙b3 ♙e6!?

Black wants to eliminate the pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal by offering to exchange pieces. The pin on the queen's knight with 7...♙g4 is also popular. 8 ♘bd2 h6?! (the prelude to an interesting retreat of the king's knight in order to then play ...♙g5 and exchange bishops) 9 ♖e1 ♘h7 (The point of the previous move: Black is fighting for the dark squares) 10 h3 ♙xf3 11 ♘xf3 ♘g5 (if 11...♘d7 then 12 d4 is good for White) 12 ♘h2!?! (White has no intention of allowing Black to simplify matters by exchanging on f3 and playing ...♙g5) 12...♘h7 13 f4 offers some attacking chances.

8 ♙c2

The bishop retreats. White is treating the position like a Ruy Lopez and wants to retain his influential light-squared bishop.

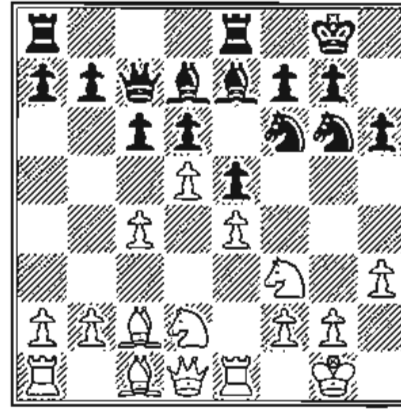
8...h6

Georgadze makes sure that bishop cannot be exchanged after ♘g5. At the moment 8...♘bd7 9 ♘g5 ♙g4! is fine for Black but after 9 ♖e1 ♗c7 10 d4 ♖e8 11 h3 it is likely that 11...h6 is the best choice.

9 ♖e1 ♘bd7 10 ♘bd2 ♗c7 11 d4 ♖fe8 12 h3!

Kasparov felt this was a star move because it emphasised his containment of Black's chances on the kingside.

12...♘f8 13 c4 ♘g6 14 d5 ♙d7

**15 ♘b1!**

In his book *The Test of Time* Kasparov was full of praise for this ingenious move. He wrote "less was promised by the transfer of the knight via f1, since this would have weakened White's fighting potential on the queenside." Well, it makes sense when you hear it from the world number one and now the plan is ♘c3, ♙d2 and b2-b4.

15...♙f8 16 ♘c3 c5?!

Black is happy to block the position and go for a draw.

17 ♙a4

A far-sighted idea because White wants to exchange this bishop which has now served its purpose. After the trade Black's dark-squared bishop is somewhat restricted whilst White's is comparatively active.

17...a6 18 ♙xd7 ♘xd7

Upon the recapture 18...♗xd7 Kasparov suggests 19 a3 b5 20 ♙e3 and the opening of the position will favour White's more active pieces.

19 g3 ♙e7 20 h4 ♘f6 21 ♘b2 ♗d7 22 a4 ♗h3

This move was followed by a draw offer but Kasparov always plays to win – especially when his

opponent is already heading for time trouble.

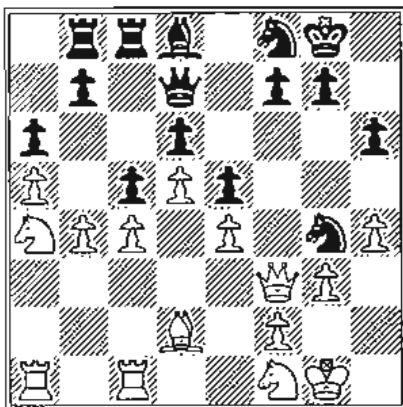
23 ♖f3 ♕d7

Black should really look to improve his pieces with 23...♙d8 but after 24 a5 b5 25 axb6 ♙xb6 White is still slightly better.

24 a5 ♘f8 25 ♙d2 ♞ec8 26 ♘f1 ♘g4

Though it looks aggressive, Kasparov thought this move was weak because there are not enough pieces to create an attack. Now the queen on d7 is obliged to protect the knight so Black can't manoeuvre the king's knight via d7 to add weight to the defence on the queenside. This is a key reason for Kasparov to strive for a rapid opening up of attacking lines.

27 ♘a4 ♙d8 28 ♞ec1 ♞ab8 29 b4!



White has been building up to this moment for some time because he wants to crack open the queenside. This will be to his advantage because, with more room to manoeuvre, he can quickly create attacking opportunities.

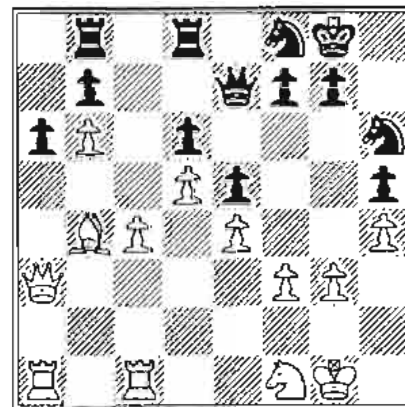
29...cxb4 30 ♙xb4 h5

It has been suggested that Black should seize his chance to advance the b-pawn so as to avoid being smothered. After 30...b5 a sample line is 31 axb6 ♙xb6 32 c5 dxc5 (or 32...♙a7 33 c6 ♖c7 34 ♙xd6! ♖xd6 35 ♖xg4 and White is winning) 33 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 34 ♘xc5 ♞xc5 35 ♞xc5 ♞b2 36 ♘e3 ♘xf2 37 ♞c2 when I think White is much better.

31 ♘b6 ♙xb6 32 axb6 ♖e7 33 ♖a3

White is applying constant pressure by making sure that Black is on the defensive and confined to manoeuvring in cramped quarters.

33...♞d8 34 f3 ♘h6



35 c5

After marshalling the game with great force Kasparov breaks through with a pawn thrust.

35...dxc5 36 ♙xc5 ♖f6 37 ♖g2

37 ♙e7? is not so strong in view of 37...♖xb6+.

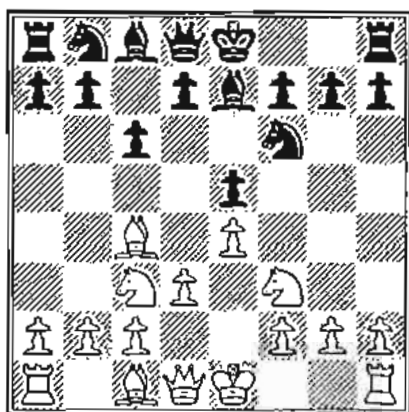
37...♞e8 38 ♙e3 ♘d7 39 ♞ab1 ♖e7 40 ♖xe7 ♞xe7 1-0

Black decided to resign rather than wait for 41 ♞c7 pinning the knight and threatening 42 d5-d6.

In the following game White decides to contest the centre with 5 $\text{d}c3$ and is then inspired to launch a risky kingside attack.

Meszaros – Husek
Sarospatak 1995

1 $\text{e}4 \text{e}5$ 2 $\text{d}c4 \text{d}f6$ 3 $\text{d}3 \text{c}6$ 4 $\text{d}f3$
 $\text{d}e7$ 5 $\text{d}c3$



5...d6

Black simply defends the e-pawn. Or 5...0-0 6 $\text{d}b3$ (6 $\text{a}3?!$ is a ploy to allow the bishop to retreat immediately to a2 but it fails to impress upon 6...d5! 7 $\text{d}a2 \text{d}xe4$ 8 $\text{d}xe4 \text{c}xd1+$ 9 $\text{c}xd1 \text{d}bd7$ with a comfortable position where White's king is awkwardly placed, I.Rogers-J.Rogers, British Team Championship 2001; on the other hand 6 $\text{d}xe5$ allows 6...d5 7 $\text{d}b3 \text{d}4$ when if the queen's knight moves then ... $\text{c}a5+$ wins) 6... $\text{c}c7$ 7 0-0 $\text{d}a6$ 8 $\text{a}3 \text{d}c5$ 9 $\text{d}a2 \text{d}6$ 10 $\text{b}4 \text{d}e6$ 11 $\text{d}e2 \text{a}5$ 12 $\text{d}b2 \text{e}e8$ 13 $\text{c}d2$ with equal chances although Black's position is cramped, Kupreichik-Yusupov, Minsk 1982.

6 a4

Meszaros wishes to curtail the possibility of Black playing ...b7-b5. 6 h3 is possible to stop the bishop pinning the king's knight. The game Shah-Stefanova, Moscow 2001, continued 6... $\text{d}bd7$ 7 0-0 b5 8 $\text{d}b3 \text{d}c5$ (Black prepares to exchange the light-squared bishop which is usually a key attacking piece) 9 $\text{d}e2$ 0-0 10 $\text{c}3 \text{d}xb3$ 11 $\text{axb3 e}e8$ 12 $\text{d}e3 \text{a}5$ 13 $\text{b}4 \text{d}d7$ 14 $\text{bxa5 e}xa5$ with an equal position where a draw was soon agreed, Shah-Stefanova, Moscow 2001.

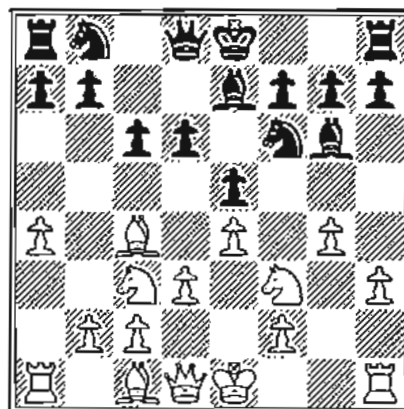
6...d4

The idea of a queenside fianchetto with 6...b6 is rather slow but proved reasonable in Voiska-Levier, St Chely d'Aubrac 2002. That game went 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 $\text{c}c7$ 9 $\text{d}a2 \text{a}6$ 10 $\text{d}4$ with equal play.

7 h3 d4 8 g4

This advance is classed as an attacking option because White intends to further advance the kingside pawns.

8...d6



9 c4

White adds extra support to the e4 pawn in case of ...d6-d5 and prepares possible queenside castling. El Hamdaoui-Akhrouf, Rabat 2001, saw instead 9 ♖g1!? (designed to support the g4 pawn and follow up with an advance of the h-pawn although a look at the main game reveals that the h-pawn can be advanced anyway because of the threat to trap the bishop on g6) 9. ♖a6 10 h4 h5 11 g5 ♘d7 12 ♜c2 ♘c7 13 d4 with equal chances.

9...♘bd7 10 h4

With this kingside pawn charge, White makes it clear that his priority is attack.

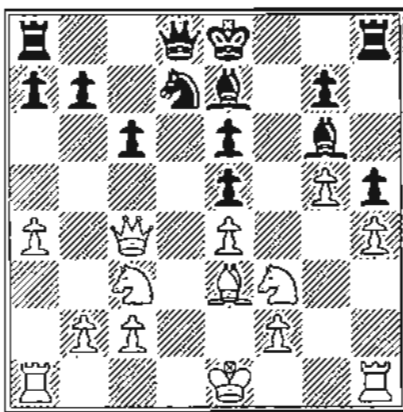
10...h5

10...♘xg4? is no good because 11 h5 traps the bishop.

11 g5 ♘h7 12 ♙e3 ♘hf8?!

This looks rather passive because the black king is entombed. Perhaps 12...♜a5!? should be considered.

13 d4 ♘e6 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♙xc6 fxe6 16 ♜c4

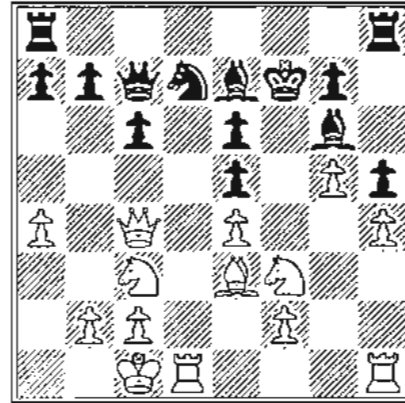


16...♙f7?

Black is keen to defend the e-pawn but this is a serious mistake for tactical reasons. The alternative

16...♜f8 is met by 17 ♜h3 but at least Black would still be in the game after 17...♜a5 18 0-0-0 even if White does retain the upper hand.

17 0-0-0 ♜c7



18 ♜xd7! 1-0

A more restrained set-up for Black is examined in the next game:

Vogt – Chekhov
Halle 1981

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♘f3 ♙e7 5 0-0 d6 6 h3 0-0

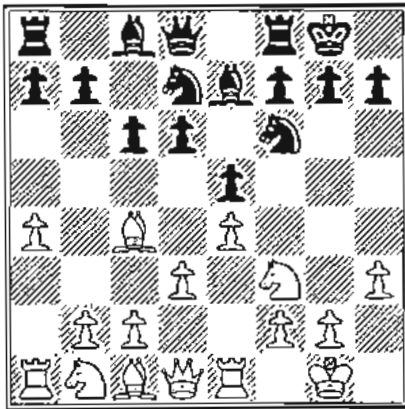
6...♘bd7 7 a4 ♘f8 8 ♘c3 ♘g6 (an interesting idea by Black who is trying to save time compared to lines where he castles and then has to move the rook to e8 in order to make room on f8 for his knight) 9 d4 ♜c7 10 ♙b3 0-0 11 ♙e3 h6 12 a5 ♙d7 13 ♜e1 led to equal chances in Mikuev-Studnicka, Karlovy Vary 2004.

7 ♜e1

Also possible is 7 ♙b3 ♘bd7 8 c3 d5 9 ♜e2 dxe4 10 dxe4 ♜c7 11 ♙c2!? (I prefer 11 ♘bd2 to keep the bishop active on the a2-g8

diagonal, especially after 11...♖e8? which allows 12 ♘g5 ♜f8 13 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 14 ♚c4 winning) 11...a5 12 ♘bd2 ♘h5 13 ♘c4 b5 14 ♘e3 ♘f4 15 ♚d2 ♘c5 16 ♘f5 ♜d8 17 ♚e3 f6 18 ♚h2 ♙xf5 19 exf5 ♘d5 0-1 Jasim-Safin, Dubai 2001.

7...♘bd7 8 a4



White decides to eliminate the possibility of ...b7-b5 and make room for a bishop retreat if need be.

8...a5

Chekov wishes to stop White's expansion on the queenside. Instead 8...d5 is worth considering although Black has to be careful that his opponent doesn't gleefully then attack his pawn centre. The game Vogt-Magerramov, Baku 1980 continued 9 exd5 cxd5 10 ♙a2 e4?! 11 dxe4 dxe4 12 ♘g5 ♙c5 13 ♘c3 ♚b6 14 ♘gxe4 (White wins a pawn whilst defending his own one on f2) 14...♘xe4 15 ♘xe4 ♙e7 16 ♘c3 ♙c5 17 ♘e4 gave White an extra pawn.

9 ♘c3 h6

Perhaps 9...♘c5 should be tested when 10 d4 exd4 11 ♘xd4 is slightly better for White.

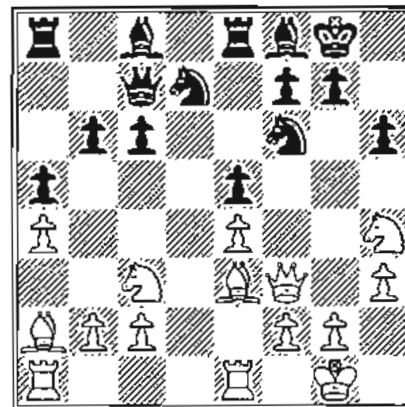
10 ♙a2 ♜e8 11 d4 ♙f8 12 ♙e3 ♚c7 13 ♘h4!

The knight heads for the influential f5 square. 13 dxe5 is less impressive because it releases the tension in the centre, thereby making it easier for Black to activate his cramped pieces: 13...dxe5 14 ♘h4 ♙c5 15 ♘f5 ♙xe3 16 ♜xe3 ♘f8 17 ♚f3 ♙xf5 18 exf5 ♜ad8 led to roughly equal chances and a quickly agreed draw in Emms-Balogh, Batumi 1999.

13...b6?!

Even at this early stage an indication that Chekhov is concentrating on the queen's flank – a sure sign that the potential crisis on the kingside is being underestimated. Instead 13...exd4!? 14 ♙xd4 ♙e7 15 ♘f5!? ♘e5 looks passive but is probably Black's best chance to stem the onslaught.

14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♚f3!



The queen transfers to the kingside in preparation for an attack.

15...♙c5 16 ♘f5 ♙xe3 17 ♜xe3 ♚f8

Not 17...♘c5 due to 18 ♖xh6+ gxh6 19 ♚xf6 with a clear advantage.

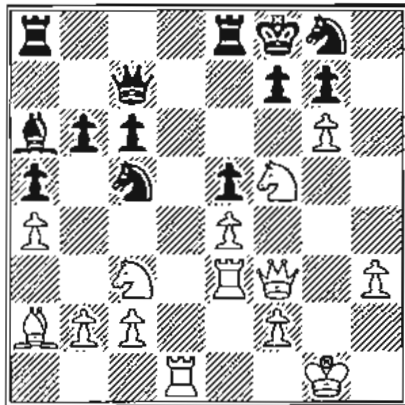
18 ♜d1 ♙a6 19 ♖xh6!

A delightful sacrifice which causes Black terrific problems.

19...♞e7

After 19...gxh6 White storms to victory with 20 ♜xd7! ♚xd7 (or 20...♘d7 21 ♚xf7 mate) 21 ♚xf6 ♙c8 22 ♜d3 ♚c7 23 ♚xh6+ and it is time for Black to give up.

20 ♖f5 ♞ee8 21 g4 ♘c5 22 g5 ♙g8 23 g6!



23...f6

The position is hopeless for Black: 23...♘e6 24 gxf7 ♚xf7 25 ♘d6 ♚xf3 26 ♜xf3+ ♘f4 27 ♘xe8 wins or 23...fxg6 24 ♘e7+ ♘f6 25 ♘xg6 mate.

24 ♙xg8 ♚xg8 25 ♚h5 1-0

There is another possibility for White to try and unlock Black's defence and that is by playing 6 c3 with similar play to a closed Giuoco Piano.

Tischbierek – De Vreugt
German Team Championship 2002

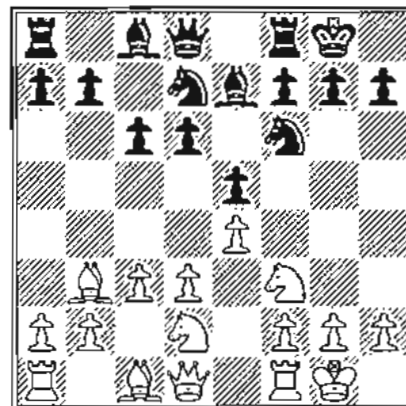
1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d3 c6 4 ♖f3 ♙e7 5 0-0 d6 6 c3

White prepares to play a future d3-d4 so that if Black exchanges on d4 he can take back with the pawn. The move-order is fairly flexible because 6 ♞e1 can transpose back into the main game. It is worth noting the following spectacular tactic which has claimed a number of victims: 6...0-0 7 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 8 c3 ♞e8? (a natural move but a blunder) 9 ♙xf7+! ♚xf7 10 ♖g5+ ♚g8 11 ♘e6 1-0 Paecht-Seps, Accentus 2004 when Black resigned in view of 11...♚b6 12 ♘c4 ♚b5 13 ♘c7 trapping the black queen.

6...0-0 7 ♙b3 ♘bd7

This is the standard continuation where Black keeps his options open. The ideas available include a stout defence with ...♞e8 followed by ...♘f8 or simply ...♘c5 in an effort to exchange off the effective bishop on b3.

8 ♘bd2



8 ♖e1 is also possible and can transpose to the main game. Alternatively 8...♖c5 has been tested on a number of occasions, then 9 ♗c2 ♗g4 (9...♞c7 10 ♖bd2 g6 11 ♖f1 ♖e8 12 ♖g3 ♗f8 13 h3 ♗g7 14 ♗e3 b6 – this is an echo of the main game and could well be De Vreught's inspiration – 15 ♖c1 ♗b7 16 b4 ♖e6 17 ♗b3 c5 18 b5 d5 19 ♖d2? d4 0-1 Angelis-Skembris, Ano Liosia 1996) 10 ♖bd2 ♞c7 11 h3 ♗h5 12 ♖f1 ♖fe8 13 ♖g3 ♗g6 14 ♖h4 ♖e6 15 ♖hf5 ♗f8 16 d4 with equal chances, Svetushkin-Skatchkov, Cappelle la Grande 2004.

8...b6!?

The Dutch grandmaster wants to fianchetto on the queenside before deciding upon the right moment to advance his d-pawn. Also possible is 8...♖c5 9 ♗c2 ♗g4 (9...♖c6 is another reasonable choice but it does restrict the queen's bishop) 10 h3 ♗h5 11 ♖e1 ♖e6 12 ♖f1 ♖d7 13 ♖g3 ♗xf3 14 ♞xf3 g6 15 ♗h6 ♖e8 16 ♖ad1, intending d4, gave White a slight edge in Moldovan-Vulinovic, Sozina 2004.

9 ♖e1 ♗b7 10 ♖f1 ♖e8 11 ♖g3

The knight is well placed to exploit Black's queenside fianchetto by occupying the now undefended f5 square.

11...♗f8 12 d4 g6

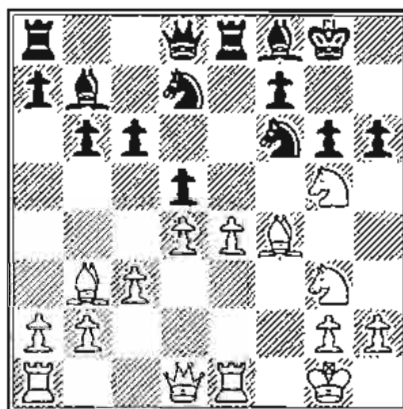
De Vreught is anxious to rule out the intrusion of the knight on f5 and also makes ready a kingside fianchetto.

13 ♖g5 d5 14 f4!?

Tischbierek has only one thing in mind and that is attack! Black is now under instant threat of a tactical hailstorm.

14...exf4 15 ♗xf4 h6

Of course, 15...dxe4? is disastrous because of 16 ♖xf7.



16 ♖xf7!

A marvellous sacrifice to rip apart Black's defence.

16...♗xf7 17 e5 ♗a6

The true test of White's play is if Black moves his knight but that allows an instant assault: 17...♖g8 18 ♞g4 (the initial threat is e5-e6) 18...♗g7 19 ♗c2 ♖e7 20 e6 ♖f6 21 ♗e5 with an easy win because of the knockout blow ♖h5+.

18 ♞f3 ♗g7

If 18...♖g8 then a discovered check with 19 ♗g5+ seals Black's fate.

19 exf6 ♖xf6 20 ♗e5 ♞d7 21 ♖e4

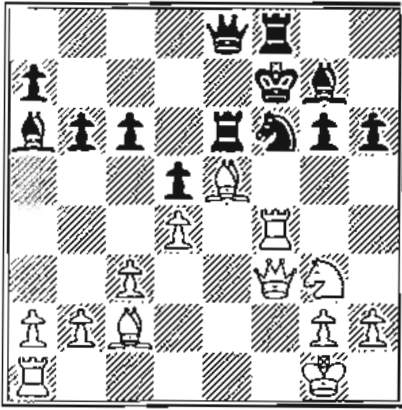
A stunning rook manoeuvre which increases White's attack.

21...♖e6 22 ♖f4 ♖f8 23 ♗c2!

Another piece is added to the onslaught and exerts its grip on the

position. Now Black cannot retreat his king due to the need to protect the g-pawn.

23...♚e8



24 ♖g4!?

This doesn't quite work so an improvement might be 24 ♚g4!. For instance: 24...g5 25 ♘h5 ♙g8 26 ♖xf6 ♙xf6? (26...♖xf6 27 ♙xf6+ ♙xf6 28 ♚f5 ♚e7 29 ♖e1 gives White the better chances) and now the golden move is 27 ♚f5! threatening mate and hitting the bishop on f6.

24...g5 25 ♘f5 ♙g8 26 ♘xg7 ♙xg4?

Black cracks under the pressure and blunders away his last chance, so allowing White to continue the attack. 26...♙xg7 is the sensible reply when 27 ♖g3 ♖xe5 28 dxe5 ♘h5 restores the material balance with equal chances.

27 ♚xg4 ♖ef6 28 ♘f5 1-0

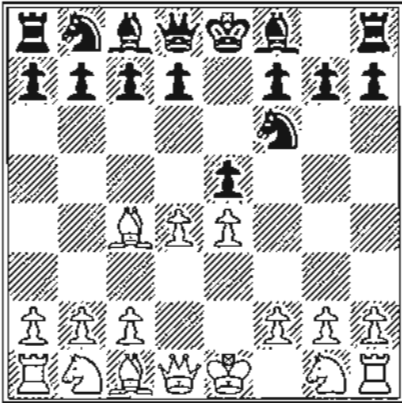
Conclusion

The Paulsen Defence is aimed at playing a quick ...d7-d5 and Sikora Lerch-Klimus is quick to implement this advance. A mistake by Black

under pressure in the opening is a positive sign for White. In Lane-Henris, I managed to create an attack with the help of 9 ♘g5, which is an important trick to remember. Indeed, Degraeve-Meijers demonstrates a similar idea – yes, the move to watch out for is ♘g5! Nunn-Murey shows White once again dealing with Black's pawn centre and while there are improvements available for Black, the basic plan for White of undermining the centre works well. Vogt-Romanishin sees the introduction of 5...♙b4+ to stop White from employing a standard set-up. But White manages to use his small initiative to stir up trouble. If you want to know how a champion handles the White side of the opening then Kasparov-Georgadze is a good place to start. There is plenty of careful manoeuvring and it represents a lesson on how to handle a position where Black is very cramped. The miniature Meszaros-Husek shows White in sparkling form. The difference here is that White develops his knight to c3, throws his kingside pawns forward and finishes with a neat trick. A more restrained set-up is used by White in Vogt-Chekhov where White eliminates Black's counterplay on the queenside before organising a typical kingside attack. I think anyone who regularly plays the Closed Giuoco Piano will welcome the sight of Tischbierek-De Vreugt where White gradually develops his pieces and launches a strong kingside attack.

Urusoff Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 3 d4



This gambit makes Black work hard from move 3 by proposing a game full of tactics and attacks. In return for a pawn White is usually rewarded with extra development, a space advantage and the initiative. There are some games where White happily sacrifices a piece for the attack so I will give rather more detailed analysis on how to handle such positions.

History

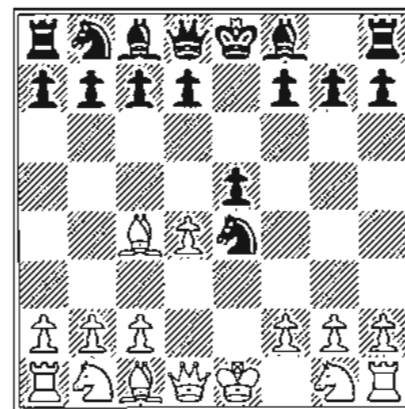
The name comes from Sergey Urusoff (1827-1897) a strong Russian player who introduced new ideas in the King's Gambit and the Scotch. He also deserves a footnote in literary history as, according to *The Oxford Companion to Chess*, he and Tolstoy (who wrote the classic

War and Peace) spent a lot of time together playing chess. The famed writer sent a letter with the following message during the siege of Sebastopol: "Prince Sergey Urusoff, a brave officer, a great eccentric, and one of the best European chess-players, proposes to play a game of chess with an Englishman to determine possession of the bastion which has long been contested at the cost of many lives." This bid for world peace was turned down by his commanding officer, which was a pity because Urusoff's gambit would surely have decided the battle.

White wins

Neishtadt – Gipslis
Riga 1955

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 3 d4 ♗xe4



It is a natural reaction to grab the central pawn but the text is regarded as being slightly inaccurate.

4 dxc5

The threat now is 5 ♖d5 so Black needs to take evasive action.

4...♘c5

It is easy for Black to go astray:

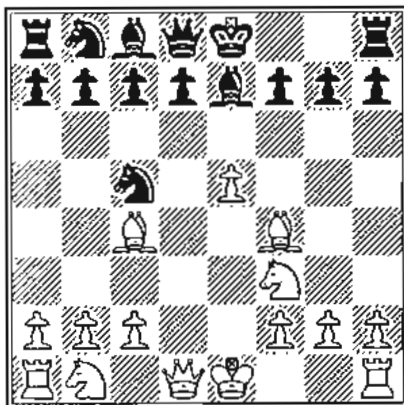
a) 4...♙c5 has been tried a few times, hoping to create complications after 5 ♖d5 with 5...♖h4. The easiest way to wrest an advantage is by 5 ♙xf7+ with a clear plus. For instance: 5 ♙xf7+ ♗x17 (5...♖f8 6 ♖f3) 6 ♖d5+ ♖f8 7 ♖xc4 is better for White.

b) 4...♖h4 5 ♖f3 ♘g5 6 ♖f4 ♗x14 7 ♙xf4 ♘e6 8 ♙g3 is better for White thanks to his slight space advantage according to Larsen.

5 ♘f3 ♙e7

A classic mistake is 5...d6 hoping to exchange queens because 6 ♙f4 dxc5?? allows 7 ♙xf7+! ♖e7 8 ♙g5+ ♖xf7 9 ♖xd8 winning easily.

6 ♙f4



The bishop is well placed to put off Black from advancing ...d7-d5 because it will be taken and after

exchanges he will be left with an isolated and backward d6-pawn.

6...♘c6

If 6...0-0 then Neishstadt's attacking formula, as seen in the main game and which incorporates queenside castling, can be employed here too: 7 ♘c3 ♘c6 8 ♖e2 a6 9 0-0-0 b5 10 ♙d5 ♙b7 11 ♘e4 ♘e6 12 ♙g3 ♖c8 13 h4 (the pawn is advanced to support a knight coming to the g5 square) 13...♘a5 14 ♙xb7 ♘xb7 15 ♘fg5 f6 16 exf6 ♙xf6 17 ♖h5 (the queen transfers to the kingside to boost the attack by threatening mate on h7) 17...h6 18 ♖g6! (a crafty mating trick which is similar to the main game – the key idea being that after an exchange on g5, the h-pawn recaptures and the king's rook will then enter the attack with decisive effect) 18...hxg5 19 hxg5 ♙xg5+ 20 ♘xg5 ♘xg5 21 ♖xg5 ♘d8 (Black has been stripped of defensive pieces and has no time to manoeuvre his knight to the kingside) 22 ♖g6 d6 23 ♖h7 ♖f7 24 ♖dh1 1-0 Lemieux-Poupinel, corr 1991.

Of course 6...d6 7 exd6 ♙xd6 8 ♙xd6 cxd6 9 ♘c3 is better for White due to the weak d6 pawn.

7 ♘c3 ♘e6 8 ♙g3 0-0 9 ♖e2

The queen gets out the way so that 9...d6 is well met by 10 0-0-0 pinning the d-pawn.

9...f5 10 0-0-0

White sets the trap of 11 ♙xe6+ as the d-pawn will be pinned by the rook against the queen.

10...♖e8 11 ♘d5

Neishtadt maintains the pressure and now threatens 12 ♖xc7 when the knight on e6 is again pinned, this time by the bishop

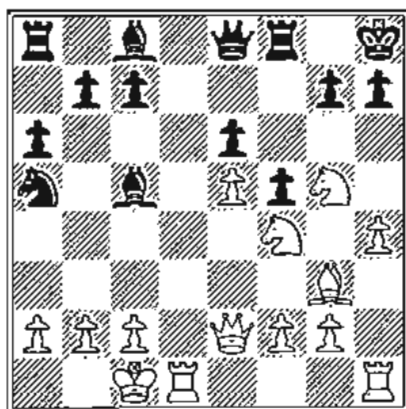
11...♗h8 12 ♖f4 a6

Gipslis is keen to advance his queenside pawns to create some counterplay but is too late to distract White from the onslaught.

13 h4 ♖a5 14 ♗xe6 dxe6 15 ♖g5

The purpose of 13 h4 is revealed: if Black now takes the knight White recaptures with the pawn and opens the h-file for the king's rook.

15...♗c5



16 ♗d8!!

A sensational sacrifice designed to deflect Black from his control of the h5 square thereby enabling the white queen to invade and destroy.

16...♗xd8 17 ♗h5 h6 18 ♗g6!

A nice little trick which obliges Black to open the h-file to avoid immediate mate.

18...hxg5 19 hxg5+ ♔g8 20 ♗h5

White is threatening g5-g6 followed by mate so Black indulges in a few spite checks.

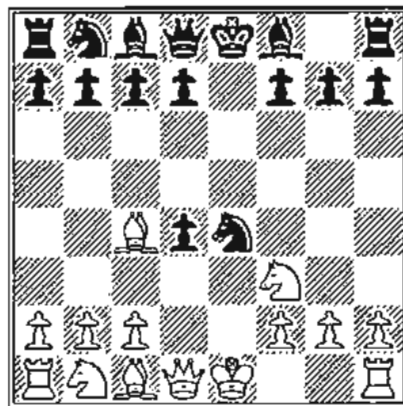
20...♖c4 21 g6 ♗d2+ 22 ♔b1 ♖a3+ 23 bxa3 1-0

The opening has been adopted from time to time by eminent grandmasters and the following game bears testimony to the fact that it remains a fearsome weapon in international tournaments:

Ayrukh – Skripchenko Lautier

Anibal open, Linares 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♖f6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4!?



This is fairly standard at club level due to some old books which favoured Black. But nowadays it is frowned upon by experts because it presents White with a wonderful attack that is difficult to resist.

5 ♗xd4 ♖f6

It seems a bit defensive to give the pawn back at once by 5...d5?! because after 6 ♗xd5 ♖d6 7 0-0 the threat of ♗e1+ gives White a strong initiative.

6 ♖c3 c6

Black wishes to cut out the influence of White's light-squared bishop by preparing ...d7-d5. It is also possible for Black to construct

a defence with 6...♙e7 when after 7 ♙g5 Black has a choice:

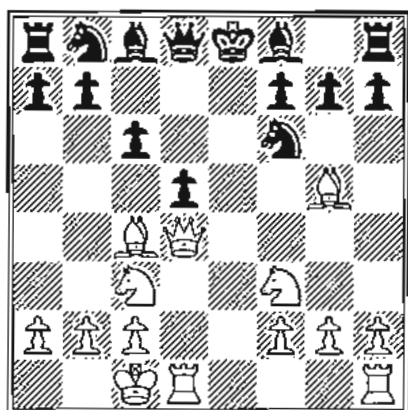
a) 7...♘c6 8 ♖h4 d5 9 0-0-0 ♙e6 10 ♚he1

a1) 10...h6 11 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12 ♖h5! ♙xc3? (12...0-0 13 ♘xd5 is good for White) 13 ♚xe6+ ♖f8 14 ♚xd5 led to a winning advantage in Tereshchenko-Rotlewi, St Petersburg 1909.

a2) 10...0-0 11 ♙d3 h6 12 ♖b1 ♘e8! (12...hxg5? is shown to be wrong upon 13 ♘xg5 ♙d7 14 ♙h7+ ♖h8 15 ♙g6+ ♖g8 16 ♘xd5 leading to mate) 13 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 14 ♖xe7 ♘xe7 15 ♘d4 ♘c6 16 ♘xe6 fxe6 17 ♚xe6 ♚xf2 18 ♘xd5 ♚xg2 19 ♙c4! with equal chances, Laes-Zitterio, corr 1971.

b) 7...0-0 8 0-0-0 h6? Black tries to force the bishop to retreat but it ends up being a serious weakening of the kingside pawn barrier. 9 ♖h4 d6 10 ♙xh6! gxh6 11 ♖xh6 ♘h7 12 h4 ♘c6 13 ♙d3 f5 14 ♙c4+ ♖h8 15 ♘g5 1-0 Hauser-Szymczak, Warsaw 1989.

7 ♙g5 d5 8 0-0-0



White has sacrificed a pawn and has a big lead in development which

leads to attacking opportunities. The practical results convey only bad news from Black's point of view because the defence has to deal with numerous tactical obstacles.

8...♙e7

The old game Estrin-Bykhovsky, Moscow 1964, is often quoted in the books so it is worth a closer look: 8...♙e6 9 ♚he1 ♙e7 10 ♖h4 ♘bd7 11 ♙d3 ♘c5 12 ♘d4 ♘g8 13 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 14 ♖g3 g6 and now instead of 15 b4? ♘xd3+ 16 ♚xd3 ♘f6, which eventually led to a Black victory, White should prefer 15 f4. For instance: 15...0-0-0 16 f5 gxf5 (16...♘xd3+? seems to cut down White's attacking options but it is a mistake due to 17 ♚xd3 gxf5 18 ♘cb5! cxb5 19 ♚c3+ ♖d7 20 ♚c7+ winning) 17 ♙xf5 offers White good compensation for the pawn due to the pin on the e-file.

9 ♖h4

White transfers the queen to the kingside in preparation for an attack. 9 ♚he1 is the old move which also has a good record and is discussed in the next main game.

9...♘bd7

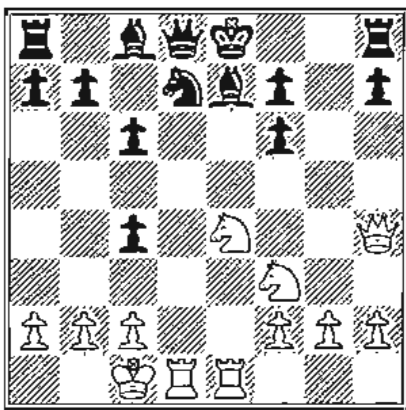
Black wishes to block the pin on the d-file. It is worth noting that 9...♙e6 10 ♙d3 ♘bd7 11 ♚he1 transposes to the next illustrative game. But Neikinheimo-Crepaux, Dubrovnik Olympiad 1950, saw a different approach with a bid for queenside counterplay by 9...♖a5!?. That game went 10 ♚he1 ♙e6 11 ♘d4 ♘bd7 (11...dxc4 12 ♘xe6 fxe6 13 ♚xe6 ♖f7 14 ♚de1 ♚e8 15 ♙xf6

♙xf6 16 ♖xf6+ gxf6 17 ♜xh7+ leads to mate) 12 ♜xe6 fxe6 13 ♖xe6 ♖f7 14 ♜de1 ♖ae8 15 ♙e2! ♙d8 (15...♙xe6 16 ♙h5+ is very good for White) 16 ♙g4 and gave White the advantage.

10 ♜he1 dxc4

It is difficult to say no to winning a whole piece. Perhaps nerves of steel are required to serenely sidestep the king to get out of the pin on the e-file: 10...♖f8 11 ♙xd5! cxd5 12 ♖xe7! ♜xe7 13 ♜xd5 ♜e4 14 ♙f4 (or 14 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 15 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 16 ♜c7 ♖e7 17 ♜xa8 ♜xf2 is equal) 14...h6? 15 ♙d6+ ♖g8 16 ♜e7+ ♖f8 17 ♜xc8+ ♖e8 18 ♜e1 with a clear advantage, Kreiman-Shirazi, New York 1992.

11 ♙xf6 gxf6 12 ♜e4



The knight joins in the attack threatening 13 ♜xf6+ and, with the black king looking forlorn in the middle of the board, it is clear Black has to be careful.

12...0-0

Black whisks the king out of the way. Instead 12...♖f8 is also possible: 13 ♜g3 (I think 13 ♜d4, with the knight heading for f5, is

worth considering) 13...♜a5! (13...h6 14 ♜f5! ♙b4 15 c3 ♙c5 16 ♜e5! ♜h7 17 ♜xf7! – an amazing move to blast open Black's kingside – 17...♖xf7 18 ♜xc4+ ♖g6 19 ♜g4+ ♖f7 20 ♜h5+ ♖f8 21 ♜g6 winning) 14 ♜h6+! ♖e8 15 ♜h4! ♜xa2! 16 ♜hf5 ♜a1+ 17 ♖d2 ♜a5+ 18 ♖c1 ♜a1+ with perpetual check as given by Lukaes.

13 ♜g3 ♖h8 14 ♜f5 ♙c5?

It is hardly surprising that Black cannot work out how to defend because the position is rather complicated. After considerable analysis it was discovered that 14...♙b4! is the best route to equality. For instance: 15 c3 (15 ♖e4 ♜a5 16 ♜e5 ♜xa2 17 ♜xh7+ ♖xh7 18 ♖h4+ ♖g8 19 ♖g4+ ♖h7 20 ♖h4+ is a spectacular draw) 15...♙xc3! 16 ♜e7 (16 bxc3 ♜a5 leaves the white king exposed to checks) 16...♖e8 17 bxc3 ♖xe7 18 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 19 ♖xd8+ ♖e8 20 ♖dx8+ ♜xe8 21 ♖xe8+ ♖g7 22 ♜c5 b5 23 ♖ is equal.

15 ♜h5

Avrukh later pointed out he could have won more quickly by immediately adding his king's rook to the attack: 15 ♖e4! ♖g8 16 ♜h6 ♜f8 (16...♖g7 is routed by 17 ♜e5!! which is a brilliant twist to turn the game in White's favour) 17 ♜xg8 ♜xg8 18 ♖g4 winning.

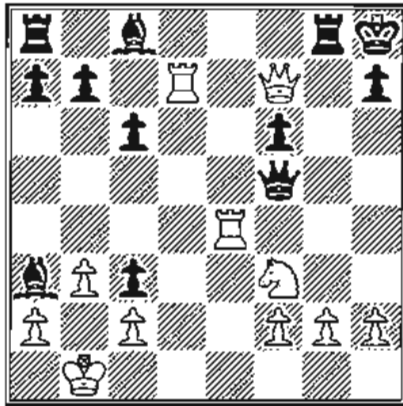
15...c3 16 ♖e4 ♜b6 17 b3 ♖g8

Or 17...♜e5 18 ♜xe5 ♙a3+ (18...fxe5 19 ♖h4 ♙xf5 20 ♜xf5 winning easily) 19 ♖b1 ♜xf2 20 ♜g3 fxe5 21 ♖h4 leads to mate.

18 ♖xf7 ♖a5 19 ♜xd7 ♔a3+

If 19...♔xd7 then 20 ♖xf6+ ♜g7
21 ♖xg7 mate.

20 ♔b1 ♖xf5

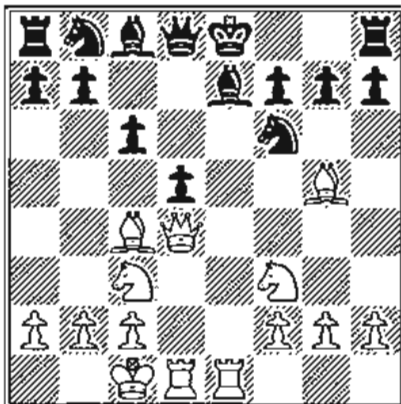


21 ♜e8 1-0

The innovation 9 ♖h4 certainly gives White great attacking opportunities but the old main line is also worth exploring. This is 9 ♜he1 which has been tested at all levels:

Barnard – Steadman
Correspondence 1997

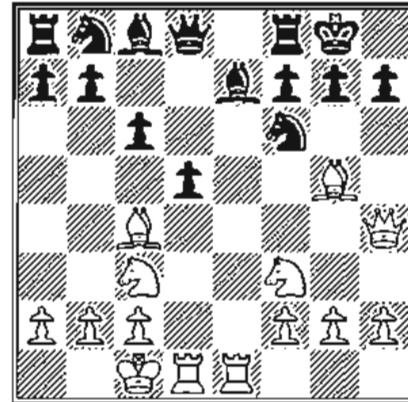
1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 ♖f6 3 d4 exd4 4
♖f3 ♖xe4 5 ♖xd4 ♖f6 6 ♔g5 ♔e7
7 ♖c3 c6 8 0-0-0 d5 9 ♜he1



This is known as the main line because bringing the rook to the centre has been analysed in depth over a considerable period of time. However it still continues to excite, particularly in correspondence circles where days can be spent perfecting Black's defence.

9...♔e6

It seems a risky policy to castle into the attack with 9...0-0 when after 10 ♖h4 Black has various choices:



a) 10...h6? 11 ♔xd5! ♖bd7 (11...cxd5 12 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13 ♔xe7 or 11...hxg5 12 ♔xf7+ ♖xf7 13 ♖c4+ ♖g6 14 ♜xd8 ♔xd8 15 ♖e5+ ♖h7 16 ♖d3+ ♖g8 17 ♖g6 wins according to an analysis by Forintos and Haag) 12 ♔c4 b5 (12...hxg5 allows White to storm forward by 13 ♖xg5 b5 14 ♖ce4! bxc4 15 ♜xd7 ♔xd7 16 ♖xf6+ ♔xf6 17 ♖h7 mate) 13 ♔d3 hxg5 14 ♖xg5 ♜e8 15 ♔h7+ ♖f8 16 ♔f5 when the threat of 17 ♖h8+ ♖g8 18 ♖h7 mate gave White a terrific attack in Schlechter-Neustadt/Tietz, Karlsbad 1901.

b) 10...♖bd7 adds defensive cover to the king's knight but the

drawback is that the light-squared bishop on c8 is blocked. 11 ♔d3 h6!? (a risky move because White has at least a draw after he sacrifices the bishop) 12 ♕xh6 gxh6 13 ♖xh6 ♜e8 14 ♗g5 ♗f8 15 ♜e3 (with a strong attack) 15...♞d6 16 ♜g3 ♞f4+ 17 ♚b1 ♗g4 18 ♜xg4 ♕xg4 19 ♕h7+ ♚h8 20 ♕g6+ ♚g8 21 ♕h7+ is a draw but there is probably scope for improvement by White.

c) 10...♕e6 11 ♕d3 h6 12 ♕xh6 ♗e4 13 ♞h5! (13 ♞f4 is the old suggestion by Keres but it seems to me that 13...♕d6! is a decent defence) 13...g6 14 ♞e5 ♕f6 15 ♞f4 ♗xc3 16 ♜xe6! fxe6 17 ♞g4 ♗xa2+ 18 ♚b1 ♜f7 19 ♚xa2 and the attack maintains White's better position.

d) 10...♕f5 11 ♗d4 ♕g6 12 ♕d3 h6 13 ♕xg6 hxg5 14 ♞xg5 fxg6 15 ♗e6 ♗e4 16 ♞xg6 ♕g5+ 17 f4 ♞f6 (17...♕xf4+ 18 ♚b1 ♞f6 19 ♗xf8 is better for White) 18 ♞xf6 ♕xf6 19 ♗xe4 dxe4 20 ♗xf8 led to a superior ending, Caro-Janowsky, Berlin 1897.

10 ♞b4 ♗bd7 11 ♕d3 ♗c5

Black takes the sensible course of trying to trade pieces before the onslaught gets too heavy. Other knight moves such as 11...♗f8 12 ♗d4 or 11...♗g8 12 ♞g3 allow White a slight initiative.

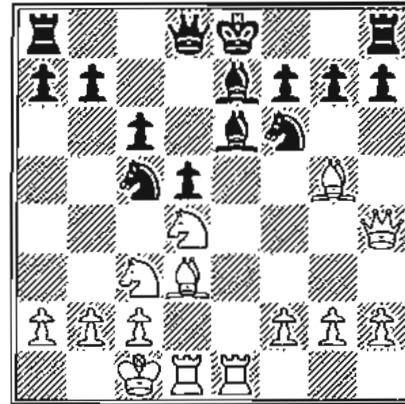
Also possible:

a) 11...♞a5?! 12 ♗d4 (as usual White seeks to exploit his pressure on the e-file to make Black suffer) 12...0-0 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 14 ♜xe6

♕b4 15 ♗e2 gives White an edge, Estrin-Klaman, USSR 1946.

b) 11...c5 12 ♗e5 ♗xe5 13 ♜xe5 d4 14 f4! (White continues to press forward in order to take advantage of the king detained in the centre) 14...♗d7 (14...dxc3? only invites problems because 15 ♕b5+ is lethal after 15...♗xd7 16 ♜xd7 with victory in sight) 15 ♕b5 ♕xg5 16 fxg5 ♞c7 17 ♕xd7+ ♚xd7 18 ♞e4 ♞c6?! 19 ♜xc5! ♞xe4 (if the rook is taken by 19...♞xc5 then 20 ♞xb7+ ♞c7 21 ♜xd4+ wins) 20 ♗xe4 gave White a clear advantage in Timoschenko-Karpov, Moscow 1969.

12 ♗d4



12...♗g8

Black is keen to resist the attack by trading pieces. Neishstadt-Volkovich, Moscow 1958, saw another way to trade bishops with 12...♗fd7!? when 13 ♕xe7 ♞xe7 14 ♞xe7+ ♚xe7 15 f4 gave White decent play.

13 ♕xe7 ♗xe7!?

The natural move is 13...♞xe7 to offer an exchange of queens in a bid to reduce White attacking options but 14 ♞g3 maintains the tension:

a) 14...♖f6!? 15 ♖d6 is worth a go if only to offer Black the chance to go seriously wrong with 15...♖xd4? (15...♘xd3+ 16 ♙xd3 ♚d8 17 ♖a3 is roughly equal) when 16 ♘b5! cxb5 17 ♙xb5+ ♘d7 18 ♙xd4 and Black can give up.

b) 14...g6!? and now, instead of 15 b4? ♘xd3+ 16 ♙xd3 ♘f6 which eventually led to a White loss in a celebrated game Estrin-Bykhovsky, Moscow 1964, White can catch people out with the improvement 15 f4! when 15...0-0-0 16 f5 gxf5 (16...♘xd3+? seems to cut down White's attacking options but is a mistake due to 17 ♙xd3 gxf5 18 ♘cb5! cxb5 19 ♙c3+ ♚d7 20 ♙c7+ winning) 17 ♙xf5 offers White good compensation for the pawn thanks to the pin on the e-file.

14 ♘xe6

I think 14 f4 is worth testing to threaten f4-f5 with a view to opening the e-file.

14...♘xe6 15 f4 ♖d6 16 g3

This quiet move is essential because the casual 16 f5?! allows Black to wriggle out of the onslaught by exchanging queens with 16...♖f4+.

16...h6 17 f5 ♘g5 18 ♖g4 ♖f6

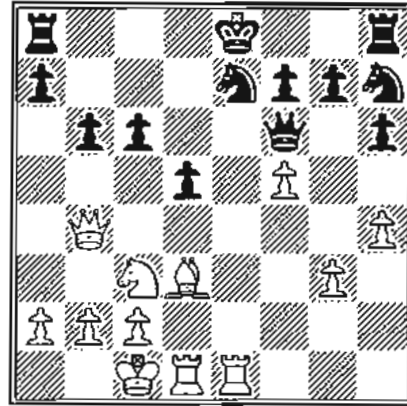
18...0-0-0 allows 19 f6+ winning a knight.

18...0-0 might look like courting disaster but, though White is still attacking after 19 h4 ♘h7 20 ♖f3, the defence looks tougher than the game.

19 h4 ♘h7 20 ♖b4!

White adds weight to the attack on the knight, which means the black king is obliged to stay on its original square.

20...b6



21 ♘xd5!

All of White's pieces are well placed to attack so it should come as no surprise that a sacrifice will rip open Black's frail defence.

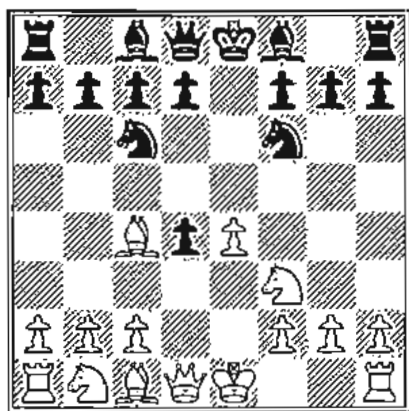
21...cxd5 22 ♙b5+ ♚f8 23 ♙xd5 a6 24 ♙d6 1-0

It is inevitable that there will be some players of the black pieces who are not too keen to battle against a pronounced initiative and strong attack. Therefore, someone who knows this opening could transpose back into a Two Knights Defence with 4...♘c6. So I will endeavour to demonstrate some lines for White which are easy to learn but difficult to beat.

Nurkiewicz – Socko

Polish Team Championship 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘f3 ♘c6



Black declares his intention to transpose into a Two Knights defence which usually arises after the sequence 1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 c4 f6 4 d4 exd4.

5 e5

I think this is the most direct way to counter Black's threat to take on e4 and the best way to avoid a mass of alternatives for Black after 5 0-0 when dxe4 keeps the balance. It is not so accurate to try 5 g5 because after 5...d5 6 exd5 the important difference is 6...e7+! which ensures equality. I myself have tried this line as Black with success, e.g. 7 f1 (7 e2 xe2+ 8 xe2 b4 wins back a pawn with the advantage) 7...e5 8 xd4 xc4 9 xc4 c5 10 xc5 xc5 11 c4 f5 12 e2 (White is pawn up but in the long-term his lack of active pieces and poorly placed king are a problem) 12...h6 13 f3 0-0-0 14 e3 he8 15 c3 g4 16 d1 c6 giving Black the initiative in Bolzoni-Lane, Brussels 1990.

5...d5

This is traditionally the best way to deal with White's pawn thrust in order that Black might stifle the

influence of the light-squared bishop on c4. Also possible are:

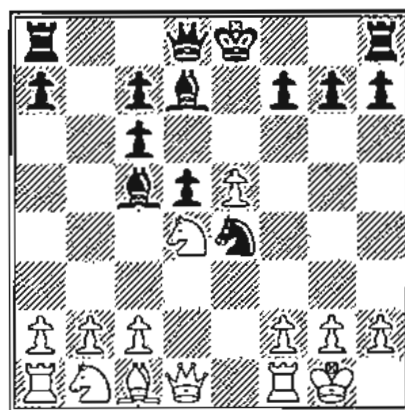
a) 5...e4 6 0-0 e7 7 c3!? d5 (7...dxc3? allows 8 d5 when the twin threats of xf7 and xe4 seal victory) 8 exd6 dxd6 9 d5 a5 10 dxd4 c6 11 f3 0-0 12 e1 with roughly equal chances, Kramnik-Rotermund, Mainz simultaneous 2001.

b) 5...g4 6 0-0 d6 (Black would pay the price for being greedy with 6...gxe5? when 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 e1 d6 9 f4 wins) 7 exd6 xd6 8 e1+ e7 9 g5 0-0 10 xe7 dxe7 11 xd4 xd4 12 dxd4 gave White a slight initiative, Zelcic-Jovanic, Pula 2004.

6 b5 d4 7 dxd4

White restores the material balance with a small initiative.

7...d7 8 xc6 bxc6 9 0-0 c5



The bishop is placed on the most aggressive square to counter lines where White tries to oust the knight on e4 by f2-f3. The quiet option 9...e7 would come under close scrutiny if White quickly advances his f-pawn: 10 f3 d5 11 f4 d4 12 d3!? (a modern idea which

voluntarily offers to saddle himself with doubled c-pawns in return for trading off Black's influential knight) 12...♖xc3 13 bxc3 c5 14 ♖e2 ♗b5 15 f5 led to excellent attacking chances in Turov-Kallio, Budapest 2003.

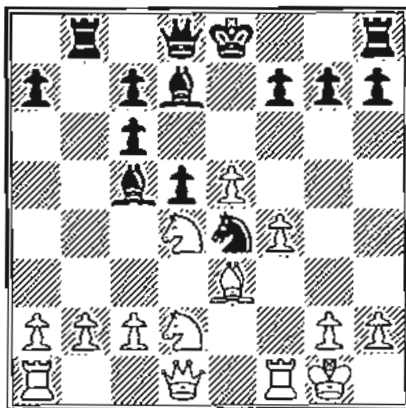
10 f3

A clever little move which gains time by attacking the knight. Instead, the immediate 10 f4 gives Black an extra tempo compared to the game.

10...♖g5 11 f4 ♖e4 12 ♗e3 ♜b8

A direct approach hitting the b2 pawn. Or 12...♗b6 13 ♖d2 ♖xd2 14 ♜xd2 (given a chance White will play ♖b3 if Black hesitates in advancing the c-pawn) 14...c5! 15 ♖f3 d4 16 ♗f2 ♗c6 17 ♜d3 ♜d7 18 f5! with a double-edged position.

13 ♖d2



13...0-0

Black wants to get his king to safety before creating any serious counterplay. If 13...♜xb2 then 14 ♖xe4 dxe4 15 ♜e1 is slightly better for White because of the option to retreat the bishop to f2 followed by

taking on e4. Weeramantry-Olson, North Bay 1999, saw Black try 13...♖xd2 when after 14 ♜xd2 ♜e7 15 ♖b3 ♗b6 16 ♜c3! White was doing well because he had taken measures against Black freeing his position with an advance of the c-pawn: 16...f6 17 ♜ae1 0-0 18 e6! ♗e8 (18...♗xe6 19 ♗xb6 axb6 20 f5 wins) 19 f5 g6 20 g4 (a model example of how to conduct the attack by getting a firm grip on the position) 20...gxf5 21 gxf5 ♖h8 22 ♖c5 ♜g8+ 23 ♖h1 ♗h5 24 ♖d7 ♜bf8 25 ♗h6 d4 26 ♗xf8 1-0.

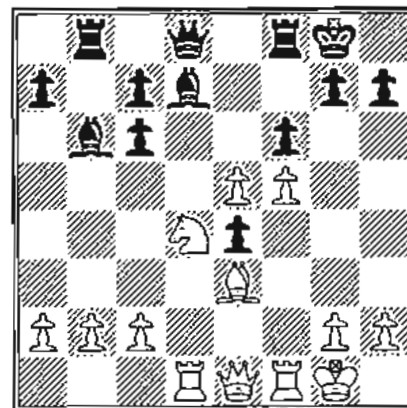
14 ♖xe4 dxe4 15 ♜e1

White moves the queen to the kingside in preparation for an attack involving the advance of the f-pawn.

15...♗b6

15...♜xb2 is well met by 16 ♜c3 when 16...♗xd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜xc2?! 18 ♜ad1 wins.

16 f5 f6 17 ♜d1!



17...♗xd4

17...fxe5?! allows White to exploit the pin on the d-file by 18 ♖e6 when the knight fork wins the exchange.

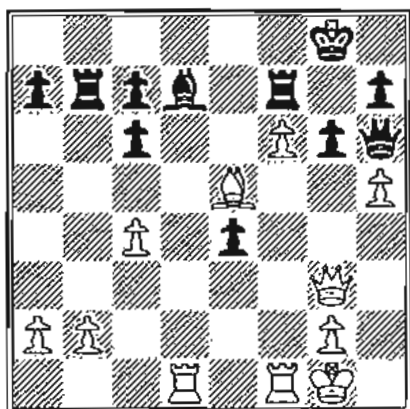
18 ♕xd4 fxe5 19 ♕xe5 ♖b5 20 ♖g3

The threat of mate looms large for Black who is already busted.

20...♗f7 21 f6 g6 22 c4 ♗b7 23 h4

Nurkiewicz steps up the onslaught by introducing the h-pawn as a way of undermining the g6 pawn.

23...♖f8 24 h5 ♖h6



25 ♗xd7!

White finishes in style by employing a decisive combination.

25...♗xd7 26 ♖h3 ♗f7 27 hxg6 1-0

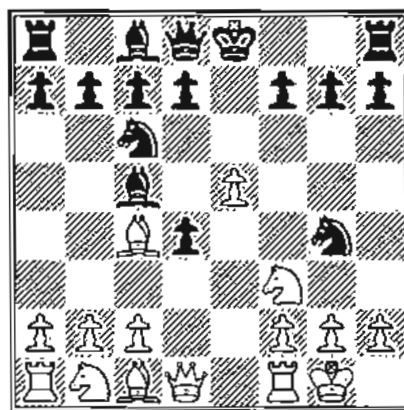
Black resigned because after 27...♖xg6 28 ♖c8+ followed by 29 ♖xb7 wins easily.

The alternative for Black is to try 4...♕c5 in the hope of transposing to the complicated Max Lange Attack. However in the next game look at the note to Black's 6th move so as to make sure you avoid that particular variation.

Pirrot – Thinius

German Team Championship 1997

1 e4 e5 2 ♕c4 ♘f6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘f3 ♕c5 5 0-0 ♘c6 6 e5 ♘g4



This old move, originally suggested by the first world champion Wilhelm Steinitz, is currently back in fashion. Alternatively 6...d5 should be met by 7 ♕b5! which is in keeping with our knowledge from the previous main game (but 7 exf6 dxc4 8 ♗e1+ ♕e6 9 ♘g5 is a Max Lange Attack which is only suitable for those with plenty of time to study) 7...♘e4 8 ♘xd4 ♕d7 9 ♕xc6 bxc6 transposes to the previous main game Nurkiewicz-Socko.

7 ♕f4

This is the best line, supporting the e-pawn before playing h2-h3 to force the knight to retreat.

7...d6

Black challenges the e5 pawn in order to promote exchanges before the knight on g4 is embarrassed by having to retreat to h6. 7...0-0 is the old move but it means that the knight will be badly placed on h6 after 8 h3 ♘h6 9 ♕xh6! gxh6 10 c3 d5 11 ♕b3 ♕f5 12 cxd4! (12 ♘xd4

used to be played all the time but I think it is inferior because 12...♙e4 13 ♖g4+ ♖g5 is equal) 12...♙b6 13 ♘c3 ♙e4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 d5 exf3 16 dxc6 ♖xd1 17 ♜fxd1 bxc6 18 ♜d7 when White is on top due to his influential rook on the seventh.

8 exd6 ♙xd6 9 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 10 ♜e1+ ♖f8

This is the standard move to relieve the pressure but it needs some skill to handle Black's pieces now that he has volunteered to give up the right to castle. If 10...♘e7 then White goes for the ending by 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♘xd4 ♖f8 13 ♘c3 which gives him the brighter prospects because the black king is poorly placed.

11 c3

Now that Black has forfeited castling rights White can enter an ending in which his lead in development will count in his favour. Instead 11 h3 has been tested but Black had few problems after 11...♘f6 12 c3 ♙f5 13 cxd4 ♜d8 14 ♘c3 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 16 ♖b3 with equal chances, Gayson-Yeo, 4NCL British Team Championship 2003.

11...♖c5

At first glance it looks like White is in trouble because of the loose bishop on c4. On 11...dxc3 White is doing well after 12 ♘xc3 ♖xd1 13 ♜axd1 ♙f5 14 ♘d5 ♜c8 15 h3 ♘h6 16 ♙b5 since Black's pieces lack co-ordination.

12 ♘xd4!

Pirrot ignores the attack on his bishop as he has spotted a tactical trick.

12...♙d7

The point of White's tactical idea is revealed upon 12...♖xc4!? 13 ♘xc6 ♖xc6?? 14 ♖d8+ ♖e8 15 ♖xe8 mate.

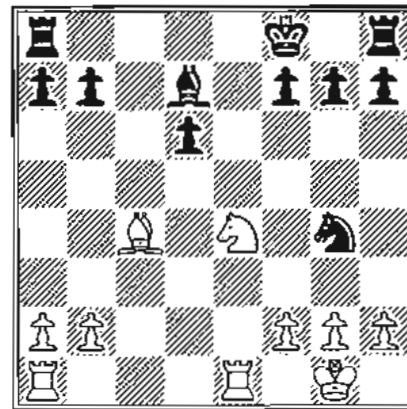
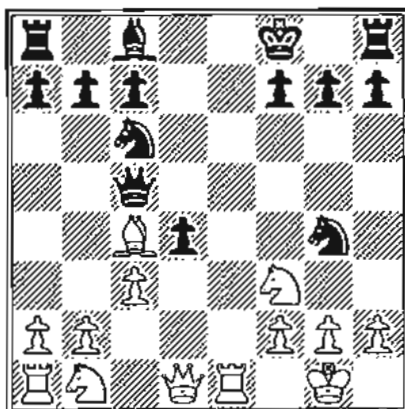
13 ♘d2

A reasonable move to get another piece into action and to defend the bishop. However I prefer the sharp 13 ♙e6!, which puts instant pressure on Black as 13...♙xe6 14 ♘xe6+ fxe6 15 ♖xg4 is good for White due the weak pawn on e6 and the misplaced black king.

13...♘xd4 14 cxd4 ♖xd4 15 ♖f3

The threats of 16 ♖xf7 mate and 16 ♖xb7 force Black to take evasive action.

15...♖f6 16 ♖a3+ ♖d6 17 ♖xd6+ cxd6 18 ♘e4

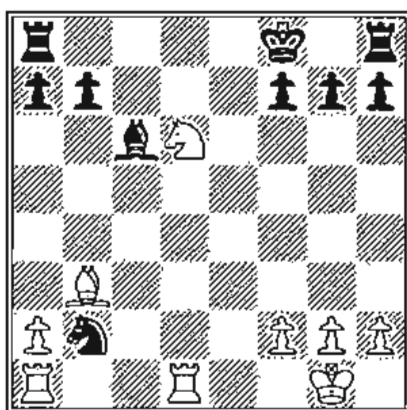


White was content to enter the ending in the knowledge that he will recover his pawn whilst leaving the black king impeding the king's rook on h8.

18...♖e5 19 ♗b3 ♘d3

19...♕e7 20 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 21 ♖ad1+ ♕e7 22 ♖xe5+ is better for White.

20 ♖ed1 ♗c6 21 ♘xd6 ♘xb2



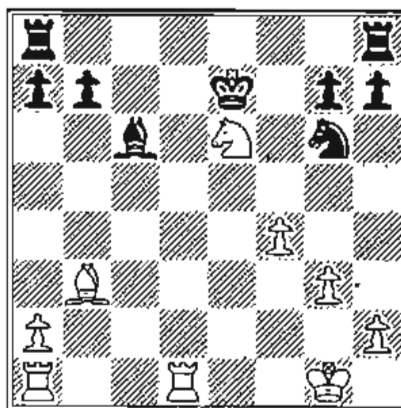
22 ♖db1

White is spoilt for choice because his more active pieces offer lots of tactical opportunities. 22 ♖d2 seems to win a piece for nothing but Black can fight back with 22...♖d8! 23 ♖b1 ♕e7 24 ♖e1+! ♕f6 (or 24...♕f8 25 ♖ee2! intending ♖d4 followed by ♖xe2 wins) 25 ♖d4 with a view to harassing the black king is very positive for White.

22...♘d3 23 ♘xf7 ♖g8 24 ♘g5 ♖h8 25 ♘e6+

The knight dominates while the hapless black king is chased around the board.

25...♕e7 26 ♖d1 ♘e5 27 f4 ♘g6 28 g3



Pirrot has a clear advantage because the exposed black king will come under attack from the white rooks.

28...a5 29 a4 h5 30 ♘g5 h4 31 ♖d4 hxg3 32 ♖e1+ ♕f8

Of course, 32...♕f6 is hardly worth playing because White still triumphs after 33 ♖e6+ ♕f5 34 ♗c2+ ♕g4 35 h3+ ♕h4 36 f5+ ♕xg5 37 ♖xg6+ ♕h5 38 ♗d1+ ♗f3 39 ♗xf3 mate.

33 h3 ♖c8 1-0

Black lost on time in a difficult position because 34 ♘e6+ ♕e7 35 ♘d8+ ♕f8 36 ♘xc6 bxc6 37 ♖d7 gives White a clear advantage.

Conclusion

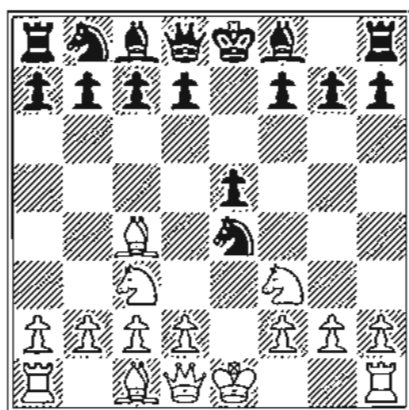
The strength of the Urusoff Gambit is revealed in Neishtadt-Gipslis – a swashbuckling attacking game with a brilliant finish. It's not always like this but the main lines do offer complications for both White and Black. Avrukh - Skripchenko-Lautier sees a grandmaster trying his luck with this sharp line and it worked spectacularly. Admittedly, Black

could have salvaged a draw but the defence for Black needs careful handling. The old main line with 9 ♖h1 is explored in Barnard-Steadman which is complicated but I think the reality is that in practice such positions favour White. In this correspondence encounter Black soon goes wrong. The reason why this opening is not always seen in the books is that it tends to transpose into the Two Knights which becomes clear in Nurkiewicz-Socko. Here White

certainly cannot force victory but 5 e5 causes instant problems for Black and these could catch out a poorly prepared opponent. Indeed, Socko is an experienced grandmaster which goes to show that anyone can come under pressure. 4... ♗c5, with the idea of transposing into the Max Lange Attack, is examined in Pirrot-Thinius. Once again White should be reminded to take note of Black's sixth move which shows how to avoid the Max Lange.

Boden-Kieseritzky Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 ♗f3 ♗xe4 4 ♗c3



White sacrifices a pawn in the name of rapid development and in order to create an attack. It is worth noting that this position can also be reached via the Petroff/Russian Game: 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 ♖c4 ♗xe4 4 ♗c3.

History

The move 4 ♗c3 can be traced back to Polerio in 1584 but the modern treatment stems from an analysis by Samuel Boden in his *Popular Introduction to the Study and Practice of Chess* in 1851. A few years earlier Lionel Kieseritzky (1806-1853) had played and popularised the line so his name was also attached to the opening. It has fluctuated in popularity but some top players have tried it with

success. Even so, I suspect White is left struggling to justify the pawn sacrifice although scope still remains for finding improvements in old lines.

White wins

Dohr – Thalmeier
Graz 1993

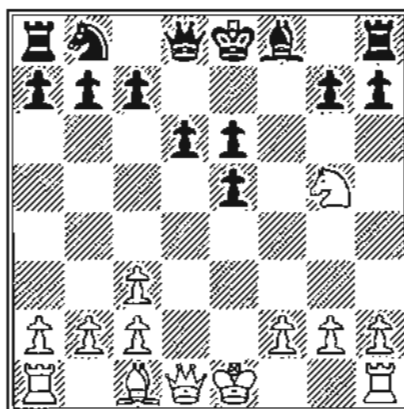
1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 ♗f3 ♗xe4 4 ♗c3 ♗xc3 5 dxc3 d6?

A classic mistake which gives White a winning position after just a handful of moves. Though it defends the e-pawn the text allows a nice combination.

6 ♗g5

The threat to the f7 pawn requires Black to take defensive action.

6...♗e6 7 ♖xe6 fxe6



8 ♖f3!

This is the killer move, which Black tends to miss when playing 5...d6. The twin threats of 6 ♖f7 mate and 6 ♖xb7 leave Black busted.

8...♗d7 9 ♖xb7 ♖c6

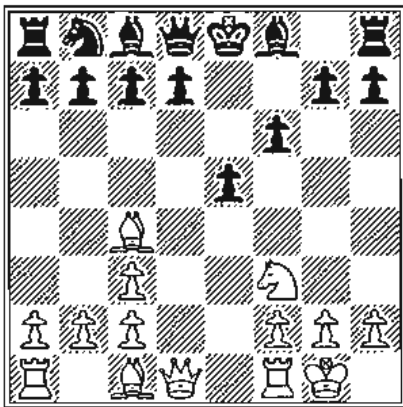
The only way to save the rook but now it is mate in 3.

10 ♖c8+ ♔e7 11 ♖xe6+ 1-0

A standard attacking scheme is to play 6 0-0 and then try to unlock Black's wall of pawns.

Moody – Ippolito
Chicago 1994

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♗f6 3 ♗f3 ♗xe4 4 ♗c3 ♗xc3 5 dxc3 f6 6 0-0!?



This has been the accepted way to continue the attack – endeavouring to get the king's rook into the game. The alternative 6 f4 is discussed in the next main game.

6...♖e7

Black puts the brakes on the threat of 7 ♗xe5 dxe5 8 ♖h5+ g6 9 ♖xe5+.

7 ♗h4

As usual in this line White prepares to play ♖h5+. It might seem a good idea to try to exploit the king and queen on the e-file with 7 ♖e1 but in the game Sedgwick-Goodger, Port Erin 2000, Black set up a solid pawn shield with 7...d6 and after 8 ♗h4 ♗e6 9 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 10 f4 ♗c6 11 b4 0-0-0 had the better chances.

7...g6 8 ♖h1

The king moves off the g1-a7 diagonal in preparation for f2-f4 which if played at once loses a piece to 8...♖c5+.

8...d6

Black is lining up the pawn in a solid formation, which is a familiar idea in this line.

9 f4 f5

An important defensive move to stop the advance f4-f5 and reveal an attack against the knight on h4.

10 ♗f3 e4 11 ♗g5 h6 12 ♗f7+

If 12 ♗f7 then 12...♖h7 followed by ...♖xf7 will give Black a clear advantage.

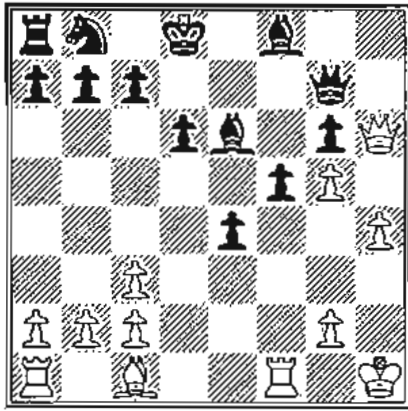
12...♔d8 13 ♖d4

It seems that the opening has worked well but crucially Black has calculated a couple of moves further than White.

13...hxg5 14 ♖xh8 ♖xf7 15 fxg5 ♖g7 16 ♖h6 ♗e6

There is no need for 16...♖xh6 17 gxh6, which gives White some slim hopes due to the passed pawn.

17 h4?



White is desperate to engineer some play by creating a passed pawn with h4-h5 but it is seriously flawed.

17...♙g8!

The queen is trapped.

0-1

I think White has to react quickly to justify the pawn sacrifice and the best continuation seems to be Boden's original suggestion 6 ♖h4.

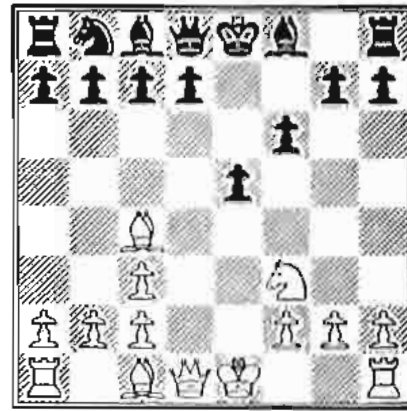
Rublevsky – Scetinin

Pardubice 1992

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♖f6 3 ♖f3 ♖xe4 4 ♖c3 ♖xc3

Black can decline to join in the main lines with 4...♗d6 when White should preserve the bishop by 5 ♘b3 ♖c6 (or 5...e4 6 ♙e2 ♙e7 7 ♖d5! ♙d8 8 d3 with the better chances) 6 0-0 e4 7 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 8 ♙e1 ♙e7 9 ♙xe4 d5 10 ♙e1 0-0 11 d4 ♙g4 12 c3 with a slight edge, Andrenko-Kovtoniuk, Alushta 2004.

5 dxc3 f6



6 ♖h4!

I think this is the best continuation because it requires Black to defend accurately. The initial threat is 7 ♙h5+ g6 8 ♖xg6 hxg6 9 ♙xh8 winning. The tempting looking 6 ♖xe5 is not much good after 6...fxe5 (6...♙e7 is mentioned in the older sources when 7 ♙f7+ ♗d8 8 0-0 fxe5 9 ♙h5 h6 is good for Black) 7 ♙h5+ g6 8 ♙xe5+ ♙e7 when the white queen is pinned so the attack evaporates.

6...g6

Or 6...♙e7 7 ♙h5+ ♗d8 8 ♖f5 (perhaps 8 ♙e3 should be considered so that White can develop smoothly while Black is beset with the worry of the king getting in the way of the rest of his pieces.) 8...g6 9 ♖xe7 gxh5 10 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 11 h4 with roughly equal chances because the material balance can be restored with ♙f7.

7 f4 ♙e7

The queen is needed to avoid a calamity. For instance:

a) 7...d6 8 f5! d5 (or 8...♙xf5 9 ♖xf5 gxf5 10 ♙d5 ♙e7 11 ♙f7+ ♗d7 12 ♙e6+ ♗c6 13 ♙e3 when

the black king is cruelly exposed) 9 ♖xd5 c6 10 ♖f7+ ♔e7 11 ♜xd8+ ♔xd8 12 fxg6 ♖c5? 13 g7 1-0 Vatter-Dieterle, Triberg 1991.

b) 7...e4 8 f5! c6 9 fxg6 d5 10 ♜h5! 1-0 Berrang-Scheuermann, St Ingbert 2001.

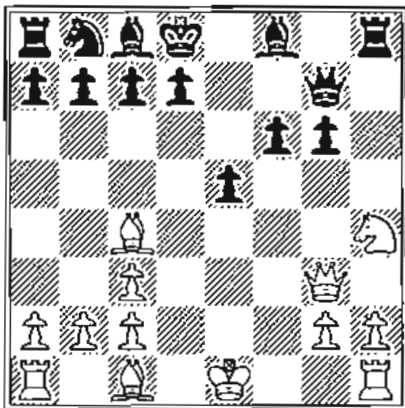
8 f5 ♜g7

The queen looks a bit silly on g7 but this is the only way for Black to survive. It is certainly not a good idea to play 8...g5? and allow the white queen to infiltrate: 9 ♜h5+ ♔d8 10 ♖g6 ♜e8 11 ♜h3 when the pin on the h-file wins.

9 fxg6 hxg6 10 ♜g4 ♔d8

I don't think it is a decent idea to take the annoying knight with 10...♜xh4?! because it loses the exchange and after 11 ♜xh4 c6 12 ♖e3 d5 13 ♖e2 ♖e6 14 g4 ♖d7 15 ♜f2 ♖e7 16 0-0-0 White should win.

11 ♜g3



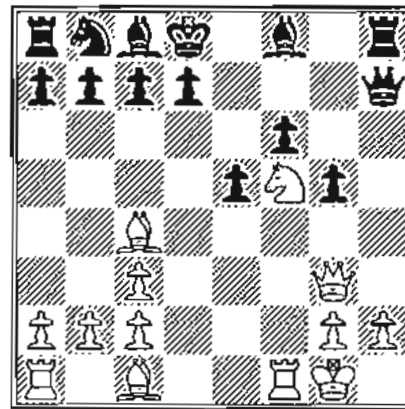
This position is mentioned in the reference book *Nunn's Chess Openings* and the analysis stops here with the comment that the position is unclear. This is fair enough but it needs more detail

because Black is a pawn up. In general I think White has sufficient compensation because the king on d8 is misplaced and upsets the harmony of the rest of the pieces. 11 ♖xg6 d5 12 ♜g3 dxc4 13 ♖xh8 ♜xh8 would be better for Black.

11...g5 12 ♖f5 ♜h7

Or 12...♜g6 13 ♖d3 (White prepares a discovered attack on the black queen) 13...d5 14 ♖e7 ♜f7 15 ♖g6 ♜g8 16 ♖xf8 ♜xf8 17 0-0 (the threat is ♖xg5) 17...♜g8 18 c4 dxc4 19 ♖e4 gives White adequate compensation for the pawns because the black king is horribly exposed.

13 0-0



13...c6

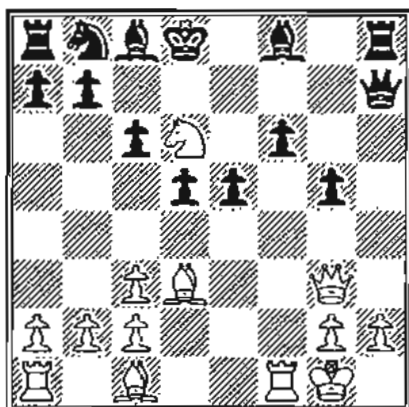
Black wishes to curb the power of the bishop on c4 by creating a pawn centre. This is a slow process when you have a lack of development so perhaps other moves need to be examined:

a) 13...d5 14 ♖xd5 ♖xf5 15 ♖xb7 ♖e4 16 ♖xa8 ♖c5+ 17 ♔h1 ♖xa8 18 ♜xf6 (Black has played accurately but as usual the exposed nature of the black king gives White decent chances despite the material

deficit) 18...♖c8 19 ♕xg5 ♖xc2 20 b4 ♖b6 21 ♗g4+ ♘d7 22 ♜af1 with roughly equal chances.

b) 13...♖c5+ 14 ♖e3 d6 15 ♖xc5 ♖xf5 16 ♖e3 ♘c6 (16...♘d7!? seems to be an improvement so that the f6 pawn is defended when the light-squared bishop is forced to move) 17 ♜f2 intending to double rooks and giving White compensation for the pawn.

14 ♖d3 d5?! 15 ♘d6



15...e4?

Or 15...♗xh2+ 16 ♗xh2 ♜xh2 17 ♖xh2 ♖xd6 18 ♜xf6 with a winning ending.

16 ♜xf6

At the cost of a piece the grandmaster grabs the opportunity to break up the pawn structure so he can target the black king.

16...exd3 17 ♕xg5

The threat of discovered check leaves Black's position in ruins.

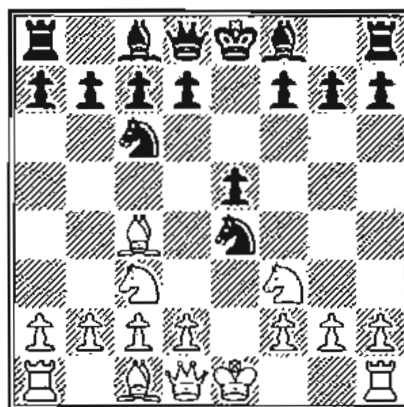
17...♖e7 18 ♘f7+ 1-0

One of the reasons why this opening is not often seen at tournaments is that Black can

transpose to the Two Knights. I have added a game so that White is prepared for such an eventuality.

Belkhodja – Solleveld
Cappelle la Grande 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 ♘xe4 4 ♘c3 ♘c6



This quiet move may well be the best defensive idea available. The intention is to forestall an instant attack by transposing back into a version of the Four Knights Defence which normally occurs after 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♖c4 ♘xe4. I suspect Black might sometimes not even realise the transposition has occurred but it is best to be prepared.

5 ♘xe4 d5 6 ♖d3

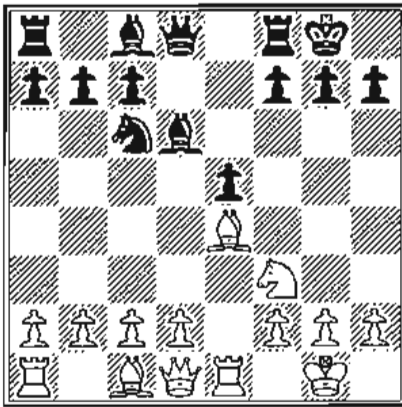
This is the sensible choice to preserve the bishop pair and be ready to regain the pawn. The wild 6 ♖b5 has been tested when 6...dxe4 7 ♘xe5 ♗g5 8 d4 ♗xg2 9 ♜f1 ♖d6 10 ♘xc6 has produced good results for White in the past but 10...a6! is an improvement. For instance: 11 ♖a4 ♖d7 12 ♖e3 b5 13 ♖b3 ♖xc6 with the advantage

due to the extra pawn and safer king.

6...dxe4 7 ♖xe4 ♖d6 8 0-0

Now that the initial flurry of activity is over White takes time to shelter his king and introduce the king's rook into the action.

8...0-0 9 ♖e1



The straightforward threat is 10 ♖xc6 bxc6 11 ♘xe5 winning a pawn.

9...♞e8

In the game Mitkov-Berzinsh, Bled 2002, Black decided to pin the knight with 9...♖g4. The continuation was 10 c3 f5?! 11 ♖xc6 bxc6 12 ♗b3+! (the pin on the knight is broken which will allow White to win a pawn) 12...♔h8 13 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 14 ♞xe5 ♗d3 15 ♗e6 ♖h5 (15...♞ae8?? 16 ♗xe8 ♞xe8 17 ♞xe8 mate) 16 ♞e3 with the advantage.

10 c3 ♖g4 11 ♗c2

The easiest way of breaking the pin on the king's knight while also threatening the h7 pawn.

11...h6 12 h3 ♖d7

12...♖h5?! 13 g4 ♖g6 14 ♖xg6 fxg6 15 ♗xg6 favours White.

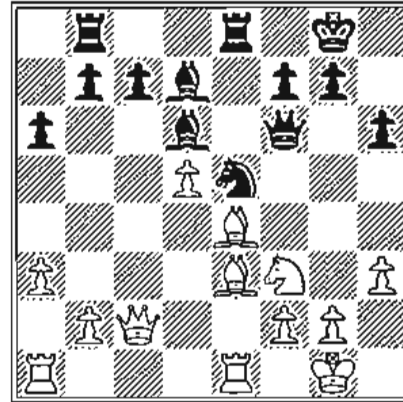
13 a3

Belkhodja is preparing to play d2-d4 and when that happens he wants to rule out the future possibility of ...♘b4.

13...♞b8 14 d4 exd4 15 cxd4 ♗f6

Black at last has some counterplay by putting pressure on the isolated queen's pawn.

16 ♖e3 a6 17 d5 ♘e5



18 ♘d2

In the middlegame both sides are busy manoeuvring their pieces to better squares. White is naturally reluctant to exchange pieces since 18 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 is irritating because of the threats ...♗h2+ and ...♗xe4 and 19 ♖h7+ ♔h8 20 f4 ♗xd5 leaves White a pawn down for nothing.

18...♞e7 19 ♖d4 ♞be8 20 ♞e3

White meets the challenge of Black doubling rooks on the e-file by following the same course of action. Basically, the chances are level.

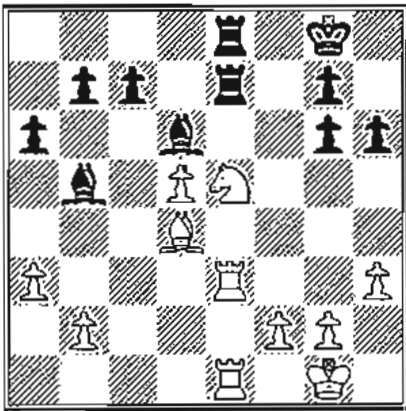
20... ♖h4 21 ♜ae1 ♘g6?!

21... ♖h5 is the preferred choice to maintain the tension.

22 ♘f3 ♖h5 23 ♙xg6 ♖xg6 24 ♖xg6 fxg6 25 ♘e5

The difference is that the endgame offers White slightly the brighter prospects due to the weakened doubled g-pawns.

25... ♙b5



26 ♘xg6

Well, it seems to be a free extra pawn but Black has the situation covered. I prefer 26 f4!? to support the knight in the centre and leave Black with the job of defending.

26... ♜xe3 27 ♙xe3 ♙d3 28 ♘h4

28 ♘f4 is just embarrassing because 28... ♙xf4 wins due to the pin on the e-file.

28... ♜e5 29 ♘f3 ♜xd5

Solleveld wins his pawn back and peace breaks out on the board.

30 ♙d4 c5 31 ♙e5 ♙f8 32 ♙c3 ♙g6 ½-½

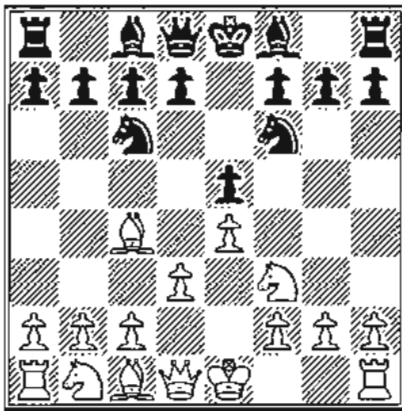
Conclusion

A dream game has to be Dohr-Thalmeier where Black plays an obvious move and is promptly lost straight from the opening. The well known attack arising from 6 0-0 is not completely convincing and Moody-Ippolito is best avoided by White. An improved way to handle the position after the pawn sacrifice is revealed in Rublevsky-Scetinin where the grandmaster playing White wins in style. The problem of transposing to another line is resolved by the demonstration of how to cope with 4... ♘c6 in the game Belkhodja-Solleveld. White has an edge but with careful play Black should be able to equalise in the opening.

Two Knights Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 ♗f3

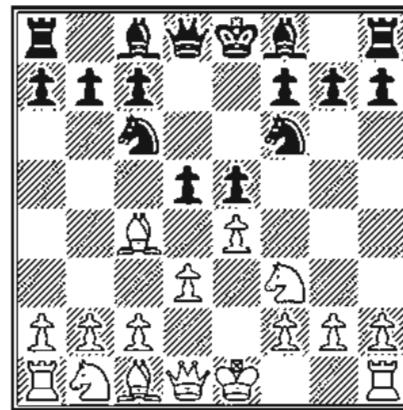
takes the battle into the middle-game.



White wins

Lane – Paterson
Sydney 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 ♗f3 d5



The Closed Two Knights is one way for White to steadily develop his pieces and contest the battle in the middlegame.

History

The Two Knights was mentioned in 1580 by Polerio and has been popular ever since. The Closed version is considered a positional response with lots of potential for aggressive play. The current world class stars who have tried this system include Adams, who often plays it, while occasionally Anand, Kasparov and Kramnik have also enjoyed success with it. Its popularity arises from the fact that it gives White an edge in the opening and

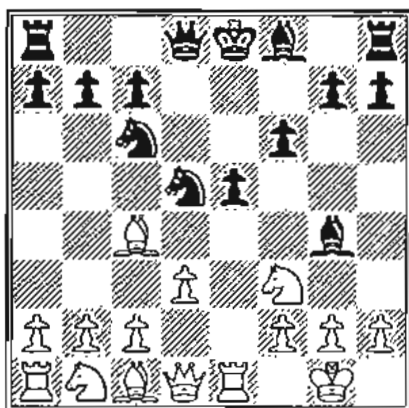
This advance in the centre is an aggressive reaction but the drawback is that it leaves the e5 pawn vulnerable.

5 exd5 ♗xd5 6 0-0 f6?!

Black wishes to support the e5 pawn in view of the prospect of White's future ♖e1. I have played this line many times and usually enjoyed quick victories. In the game Lane-Zpiljic, Dubbo 2002, Black tried 6...♗e6 when 7 ♖e1 ♗d6 8

d4! ♖b4 (or 8...♗xd4? 9 ♗xd4 exd4 10 ♖xd5 ♖xh2+ 11 ♗xh2 ♗xd5 12 c3 winning) 9 c3 ♖a5 10 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 11 ♞xc5 left Black a pawn down for nothing. Of course 6...♖g4 transposes to the game after 7 ♞e1 f6.

7 ♞e1 ♖g4?



8 ♗xe5!

I remember my opponent was momentarily shocked when I allowed my queen to be taken. However, White is in control of the position thanks to the threat of discovered check on the e-file.

8...fxe5

8...♖xd1 9 ♗xc6+ ♗e7 10 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 11 ♞xd1 leaves Black a piece down.

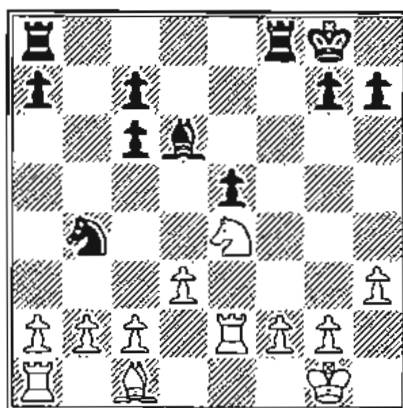
9 ♗xg4 ♗f6 10 ♗e6+ ♗e7 11 ♗xe7+

The ending is favourable to White thanks to the extra pawn.

11...♖xe7 12 ♖b5 0-0 13 ♖xc6 bxc6 14 ♗c3

A safe and steady response to limit Black's options. Instead 14 ♞xe5 ♖d6 15 ♞e2 ♗g4 16 h3 ♗xf2 looks complicated so I did not take the e-pawn.

14...♖d6 15 h3 ♗d5 16 ♗e4 ♗b4 17 ♞e2



17...c5

Black forlornly tries to do something about the doubled c-pawns but merely manages to present White with another target.

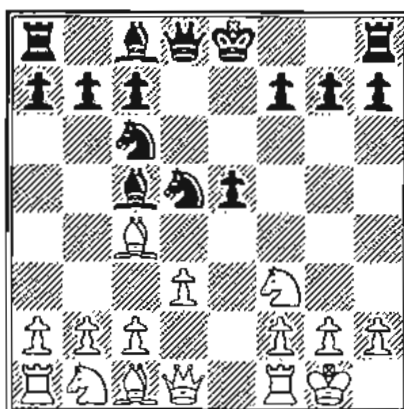
18 ♖e3 ♗a6 19 b3 ♞ad8 20 a4 g6? 21 ♖g5 ♞b8 22 ♗f6+ 1-0

It is assumed that an improvement is 6...♖c5 but recent analysis indicates that Black could be in trouble.

Gwaze – Lyell

British Championships 2004

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♗c6 4 ♗f3 d5 5 exd5 ♗xd5 6 0-0 ♖c5!?



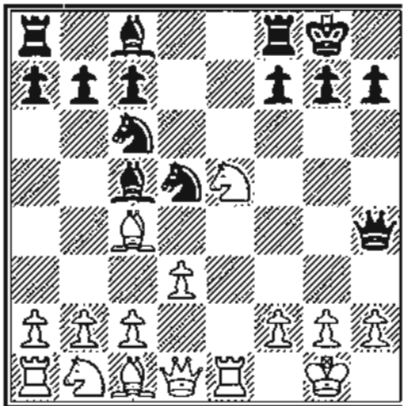
This bishop move helped to revive the line in the 1980s, particularly in the correspondence world which thrives on some of the wild lines available. It is still popular for Black but I suspect this will change once the present game becomes well known.

7 ♖e1

This has to be the best continuation as it exerts instant pressure on the e5 pawn.

7...0-0 8 ♗xe5 ♜h4

Or 8...♙xf2+ 9 ♖xf2 ♗xe5 10 ♜xe5 ♜f6+ 11 ♜f3 ♜xe5 12 ♙xd5 when White's two pieces for the rook give him the advantage.



9 ♗f3!

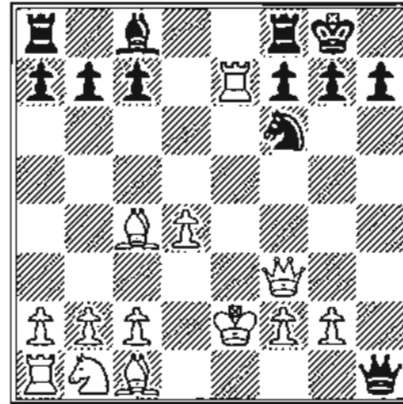
I think this poses a real problem for the entire line. In the 2004 book *The Two Knights* by Jan Pinski the move isn't mentioned and only the next game is given where Black wins. This means White might pick up a few easy victories against bemused opponents who have no knowledge of 9 ♗f3. The old move 9 ♜f3 invites wild complications which are best reserved for correspondence players who have

days to ponder the best move. I will try to demonstrate what all the fuss is about. For instance: 9...♗f6 and now:

a) 10 h3?! is a passive response: 10...♗d4 11 ♜d1 b5 12 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 13 ♗xf7 ♖xf7 14 c3 ♙g4! 15 cxd4? (15 ♙g5! ♜xg5 16 hxg4 is roughly equal) 15...♙xd1 16 dxc5 ♙c2 winning, Douglas-Lyell, British Championship 2002.

b) 10 ♗xc6 ♗g4! 11 d4 ♜xh2+ 12 ♖f1 and now:

b1) 12...♙d6 13 ♗e7+ ♙xe7 14 ♜xe7 ♜h1+ 15 ♖e2 ♗f6



This is a wonderful looking position but for practical reasons it should probably be avoided because very accurate defence is needed when your king is strolling around.

b12) 16 ♖d2 ♙g4 17 ♖e1 (or 17 ♜f4 ♜d1+ 18 ♖c3 b5 19 ♙b3 a5 20 f3 b4+ 21 ♖c4 ♙e6+ 22 ♖c5 ♙xb3 23 c4 ♙xc4 24 ♖xc4 ♜c2+ 25 ♗c3 bxc3 26 bxc3 ♜a4+ 27 ♖d3 ♗d5 28 ♜g5 ♗xe7 0-1 Nolan-Harding, corr 1989) 17...♜xe1+ 18 ♖xe1 ♙xf3 19 gxf3 ♜fe8+ 20 ♙e3 ♜ad8 21 ♖d2 c5 22 c3 with the better ending, Alesi-Simonella, corr 1998.

b13) 16 ♖e3 ♔g4+ 17 ♕d2 b5 18 ♙b3 c5 19 c3 ♜ae8! 20 ♜e1? (20 ♙xf7+! ♜xf7 21 ♜xe8+ ♞xe8 22 ♜xe8+ ♜f8 23 ♜e1 ♜h6+ is roughly equal) 20...♜xg2 21 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 22 ♜xe8+ ♞xe8 23 ♕c2 ♜xf2+ 24 ♙d2 ♙f5+ 25 ♖b3 ♜g6 26 dxc5 ♙c2+ 27 ♖b4 ♜g4+ 28 ♖a5 ♜a4 mate, Konicek-Rybak, corr 1999.

b2) 12...bxc6 13 dxc5 ♞e5 14 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 15 ♞c3 ♜xc5 16 ♙b3 ♙d7 17 ♙e3 gave White the better chances, Rodriguez-Pierrot, Mar del Plata 2001.

9...♜xf2+

The logical move – anything else signals that Black has mishandled the opening:

a) 9...♜d8 10 ♙g5 f6 11 ♞c3 fxg5 12 ♙xd5+ ♖h8 13 ♙xc6 bxc6 14 ♞e4 ♙e7 15 ♜d2 is good for White due to Black's weak pawn structure.

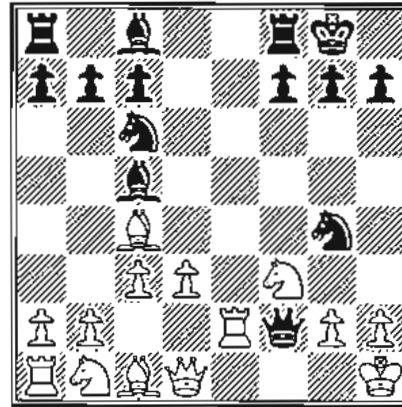
b) 9...♜h5 10 ♙xd5 ♜xd5 11 ♞c3 ♜h5 12 ♙e3 and the extra pawn gives White all the chances.

c) 9...♙xf2+ is met by 10 ♖f1 which wins a piece once the black queen retreats.

10 ♖h1 ♞f6

10...♙h3?! has been suggested but giving away a piece just to inconvenience White is not the best way to conduct an attack. 11 gxh3 ♜ae8 (11...♞d4 12 ♙xd5 ♞xc2 13 ♜e2 when Black should resign) 12 ♙xd5 wins.

11 ♜e2 ♞g4 12 c3



12...♙f5

Black wants to bring the queen's rook into the game but White should emerge with the better position thanks to tactical niceties based on the threatened h2-h3. I have taken time to have a good look at the alternatives and to make sure White knows how to handle the situation:

a) 12...♙e6 13 h3! ♙xc4 14 hxg4 with a clear advantage.

b) 12...b5 (I think this is the best try for Black but White should be able to cope adequately) 13 ♙d5 ♙b7 14 ♞bd2 and now:

b1) 14...♙d6 15 ♞c4 ♜b6 16 h3 ♞ge5 (or 16...♞f6 17 ♞xf6+ gxf6 18 ♙e3 ♜a6 19 ♜e1 with a fantastic attack because the black king is too exposed) 17 ♙e3 ♜a6 18 ♞c5 ♙xc5 19 ♙xc5 ♜fe8 20 ♜e1 ♜ad8 21 ♙b3 winning.

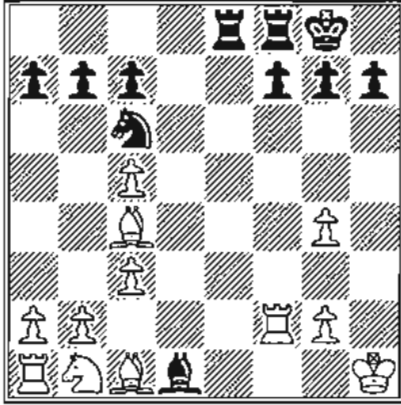
b2) 14...♜ae8 15 ♞e4 traps the queen so Black is obliged to shed more material thereby leaving White with a clear advantage.

c) 12...♞a5 13 h3 ♞xc4 14 dxc4 ♜g3 15 hxg4 ♙xg4 16 ♜e1 and White is better.

13 h3 ♜ae8 14 d4

Now three black pieces are attacked so something must leave the board.

14...♙e4 15 hxg4 ♙xf3 16 ♖xf2
♙xd1 17 dxc5

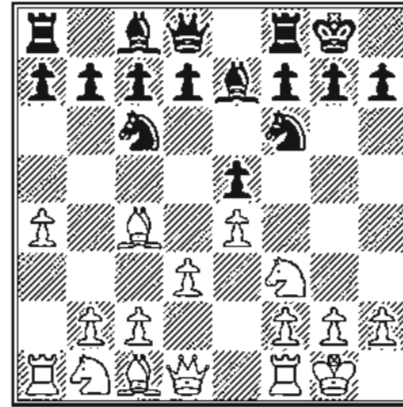


The position has cleared up and White is a clear piece ahead – a triumph for White's strategy. The game concluded: 17...♘e5 18 ♘a3 ♘xg4 19 ♖f1 ♙e2 20 ♙xe2 ♖xe2 21 ♘b5 ♘f2+ 22 ♔g1 ♘d3 23 b4 ♖fe8 24 ♙f4 ♖b2 25 ♘d4 c6 26 ♙c1 ♘xc1 27 ♖fxc1 g6 28 ♖c2 ♖xc2 29 ♘xc2 ♖e2 30 ♘d4 ♖b2 31 a4 ♔g7 32 b5 a6 33 bxc6 bxc6 34 ♘xc6 ♖c2 35 ♖a3 ♔f6 36 a5 g5 37 ♘b4 ♖d2 38 ♘xa6 g4 39 ♘b4 g3 40 ♖a1 1-0

There are various ways for White to handle the Closed Two Knights Defence but I think 6 a4, to gain space on the queenside and provide a retreat for the light-squared bishop, is the simplest plan to follow:

Inkiöv – Karadimov
Borovec 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4
♘f3 ♙e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 a4

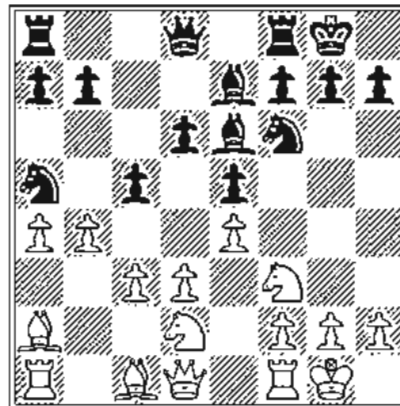


A space-gaining move, which also provides White's light-squared bishop with a useful retreat at a2 if attacked by ...♘a5, as indeed happens shortly. I think an early a2-a4 is an easy way to handle the position. The reason for this is that c2-c3 instead would encourage ...d7-d5, which in some lines can be awkward now that Black has castled and can use the king's rook to defend the e5 pawn.

6...d6 7 c3 ♘a5

Black seeks to exchange White's traditionally aggressive bishop on c4.

8 ♙a2 c5 9 ♘bd2 ♙e6 10 b4!



Inkiöv strives to get some more room by chasing the knight.

10...cxb4 11 cxb4 ♘c6 12 b5
♘a5

The knight is now safe but the question is whether it serves any useful purpose on the edge of the board? I think the answer is it could do better!

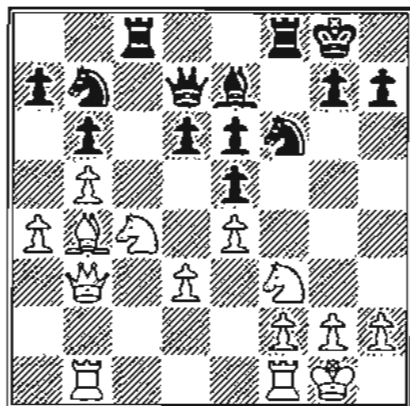
13 ♙xe6 fxe6 14 ♙a3 b6 15 ♙b4

Inkirov introduces the threat ♙xa5 to double the a-pawns.

15...♘b7 16 ♘c4

The knight on c4 is influential and Black's problem is that it is not easily ousted since ...d6-d5 would allow the e5 pawn to be captured.

16...♚e8 17 ♖b1 ♖c8 18 ♚b3
♚d7?



This move looks natural to defend the e6 pawn but it is fatally flawed. Instead 18...♘c5 is a better try although after 19 ♙xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♘e3 White still has an edge.

19 ♘fxe5!

A surprising move that in an instant wreaks havoc in the heart of the opponent's position by obliging the black queen to abandon its defence of the e6 pawn.

19...dxe5 20 ♘xe5 ♚e8 21
♚xe6+

The position has become somewhat clearer and the point of the sacrifice is revealed – White regains his piece.

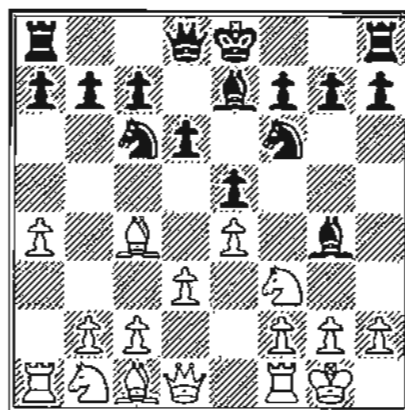
21...♚h8 1-0

Black did not wait for 22 ♚xe7 when he is three pawns down. If 21...♖f7 then 22 ♙xe7 is a winner since 22...♚xe7 allows the decisive 23 ♚xc8+.

It is also possible to pin the king's knight with 6...♙g4.

Kogan – Sanahuja Palomo
Manresa 1997

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4
♘f3 ♙e7 5 0-0 d6 6 a4 ♙g4



7 c3

The Israeli grandmaster makes sure the king's knight cannot be put under further pressure by ruling out the possibility of ...♘d4.

7...♚d7 8 ♘bd2 ♘h5 9 h3
♙xh3?!

There is always a temptation for Black to wreck White's kingside with a piece sacrifice but this would really need to be timed accurately.

10 gxf3 ♘f4

If 10...♙xh3 then White can defend against the mate threats by 11 ♘h2 ♘f4 12 ♚f3 ensuring the advantage.

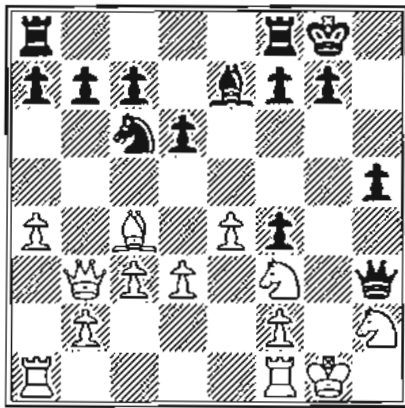
11 ♘h2 h5

This looks rather slow because although it deprives White of the g4 square the other option of adding the black king's rook to the attack is rather cumbersome. The attack disappears after 11...♙xh3 12 ♚g4 when the ending would favour White.

12 ♘df3 ♙xh3 13 ♙xf4

It makes sense for White to exchange off the attacking pieces, leaving Black with just a solitary queen for the onslaught.

13...exf4 14 ♙b3 0-0



15 ♙b5!

The white knights safeguard the kingside so now there is time for this elaborate manoeuvre which brings the queen into the action.

15...g5 16 ♘xg5 ♘e5??

I suspect this is equivalent to resignation but Black is struggling to justify his piece sacrifice. For

example: 16...♙xg5 17 ♙xg5+ ♘h7 18 ♘h1 ♙g8 19 ♙f5+ ♙xf5 20 exf5 would have given Kogan a winning advantage.

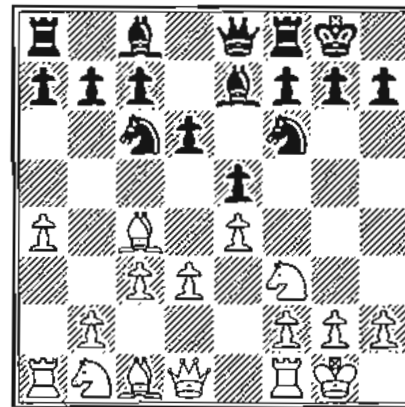
17 ♘xh3 1-0

Black is always trying to wrest an edge from this opening but White's position is very solid even after the provocative 7...♙e8.

Najer – Odinkov

Russian Team Championship 2004

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 ♙e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 a4 d6 7 c3 ♙e8



Though it looks rather odd, the basic idea is to be ready to bring the queen into the action after ...♘h8, ...♘d7 and ...f5. It is possible to play 7...♘h8 at once, with the same idea as the text, and in Sakelsek-Rodman, Bled 2002, after 8 a5 a6 9 ♙b3 ♙e8 White decided to continue aggressively with 10 ♘g5 whereupon 10...♘d8 11 f4 exf4 12 ♙xf4 h6 13 ♘f3 ♙e6 14 ♘bd2 gave White the better chances, Sakelsek-Rodman, Bled 2002.

The motivation for Black's queen shuffle can be traced to the game Dolonen-Rolvaag, Gausdal 1994, where White failed to exploit Black's set-up: 8 ♖bd2 ♙d7 9 ♜e1 ♙d8 10 b4 ♗e7 11 ♗h4 ♗g6 12 ♗xg6 hxg6 13 ♗f1 ♙e6 with roughly equal chances.

8 a5

White wants to play 8 ♖b3 but this will be met by 8...♗a5 forking the queen and bishop. Therefore the pawn is advanced and if it is not blocked it will go to a6 to weaken the light squares on the queenside.

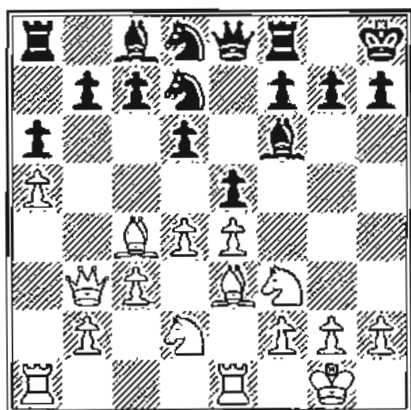
8...a6 9 ♖b3 ♗d7 10 ♙e3

Najer is just concentrating on bringing his pieces into the game.

10...♗h8 11 ♗bd2 ♙f6

Perhaps Black should be consistent and play 11...f5 to activate the king's rook when 12 exf5 ♜xf5 13 ♜fe1 gives White an edge.

12 ♜fe1 ♗d8 13 d4



White has played the opening well because he has a space advantage but all he really has done is to put his pieces on sensible

squares and prepared the advance d3-d4.

13...♗e6 14 ♗f1

The manoeuvre ♗f1-g3-f5 is a typical idea in this line but the problem for Black is that there is little sign of counterplay whereas White will improve his position.

14...♜g8 15 ♗g3 ♗df8 16 ♗f5 ♗d8 17 dxe5 dxe5 18 ♜ad1

This is a model game for White who can now open lines and find better squares for his pieces. Black is playing a waiting game but the fact that most of his pieces are passively placed on the back rank is a sure sign that all is not going well.

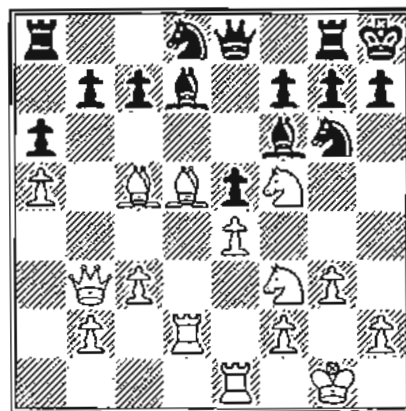
18...♙e6 19 ♙d5

Najer is still probing for weaknesses. The obvious threat is 21 ♙xb7 although 21...♜b8 is enough to hold the position.

19...♗g6 20 g3 ♜b8? 21 ♙a7

This is better than just playing 20 ♙c5 because it is a chance to dislodge the rook from its defence of the b7 pawn.

21...♜a8 22 ♙c5 ♙d7 23 ♜d2



23...♗e7?

Black cracks under the pressure and goes wrong.

24 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 25 ♜xe5

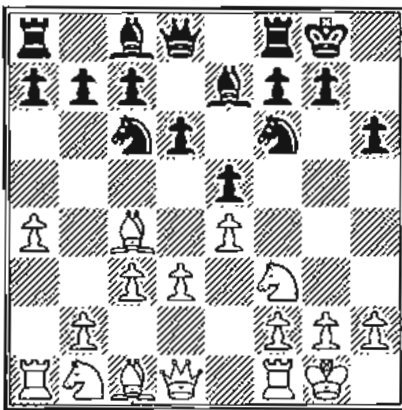
White may well just be a pawn up but that pawn held together Black's position which now collapses.

25...♗e6 26 ♖xe6 fxe6 27 ♜xe7 ♗xe7 28 ♖c4 ♖f8 29 ♜d7 1-0

In the following game White once again uses 6 a4 to good effect and Black tries a different idea with 7...h6.

Sivokho – Yemelin
St Petersburg 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♜f6 3 d3 ♜c6 4 ♜f3 ♗e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 a4 d6 7 c3 h6



The object of this move is not just to prevent White moving a piece to the g5 square. At international level it also serves another purpose – to facilitate the manoeuvre ♜f6-h7 which, with ...♗h8, will enable ...f5 to create some counterplay.

8 a5

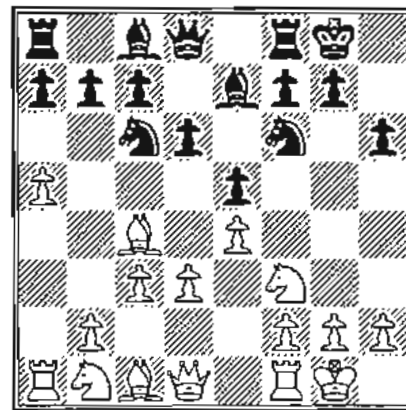
I think it is worth advancing the a-pawn in order to deny Black the option of Black playing ...♜a5.

Other lines:

a) 8 ♜bd2 ♜h7 9 a5 a6 10 d4 ♗h8 11 dxe5 ♜xe5 12 ♜xe5 dxc5 13 ♖b3 gave White an edge in Inkiov-Boudre, Cannes 1992.

b) 8 h3 ♜h7 9 d4 ♜g5 10 ♜xg5 ♗xg5 11 f4 ♖xf4 12 ♖xf4 exf4 13 ♖xf4 ♜e7?! (13...♗g5!? is an improvement because it secures equality due to the threat of ...♖xh3) 14 ♖b3 gives good play against the f7 pawn, Beshukov-Kuzmin, Voronezh 1991.

c) 8 ♖e1 ♜h7 9 h3 ♗h8 10 d4 (it seems to be a good idea to advance in the centre just before Black is able to lunge his f-pawn forward) 10...f5 11 dxe5 fxe4 12 ♖xe4 dxe5 13 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♖e1 ♖f5 15 ♜bd2 ♖f6 16 ♖b5 and the pressure on the e5 pawn gives White the superior chances, Van Mil-Szell, Berlin 1990.



8...a6

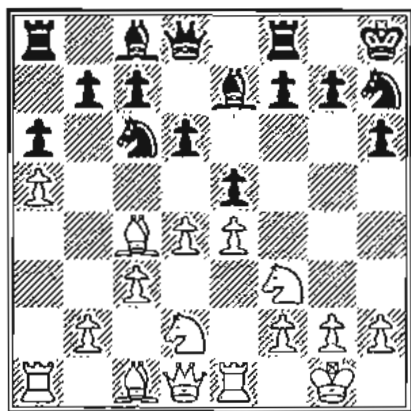
Instead 8...♖g4 to pin the king's knight was tested in N.Rogers-Hess, Philadelphia 2002. That game continued 9 h3 ♖h5 10 ♜bd2 ♜h7 11 a6 ♖c8 12 axb7 ♖xb7 13 ♖a6 (I like 13 ♖a4 threatening ♖d5 when

13...♖d8 14 d4 is better for White)
 13...♗b8 14 ♖a4 ♖d8 15 g4 (15
 d4!? should be considered)
 15...♙g6 16 ♗d7 ♖f6 and now,
 instead of 17 ♗a4 as played in the
 game, I think White could win with
 17 ♖xe5! which transforms the
 position to his favour after
 17...♖xd7 18 ♖xd7 and the black
 queen cannot escape.

9 ♖bd2 ♘h8

Black is preparing to advance the
 f-pawn and the first job is to avoid
 the pin on the a2-g8 diagonal.

10 ♙e1 ♖h7 11 d4



It is worth noting that White
 makes a point of contesting the
 centre just before Black can
 advance his f-pawn. The idea is that
 if Black plays ...f5 then White can
 exchange pawns with the better
 pawn structure.

11...exd4

Or 11...f5 12 dxe5 ♖xe5 13 ♖xe5
 dxe5 14 exf5 ♙xf5 15 ♗e2 with the
 advantage due to the weak e5 pawn.

12 cxd4 f5 13 d5!

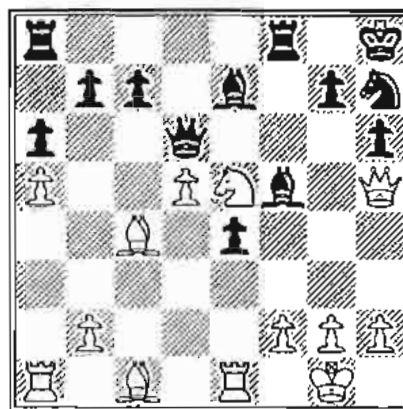
White finds the perfect time to
 advance the d-pawn because a
 knight retreat would be poor while

the continuation in the game finds
 another way to undermine Black's
 pawns.

13...♖e5 14 ♖xe5 dxe5 15 ♖f3
 fxe4

If 15...♙d6 to defend the e5 pawn
 then 16 exf5 ♗xf5 17 ♙d3 is in
 White's favour.

16 ♖xe5 ♙f5 17 ♗h5 ♗d6



18 ♖f7+?

It looks like White is about to beat
 a top grandmaster with this
 straightforward fork but he has not
 calculated sufficiently. Instead, 18
 ♙f4! might have prompted
 resignation because the threat of
 ♖f7+ would involve a discovered
 attack on the black queen. It also
 means that evasive action would at
 least rule out the game continuation
 of trapping the white queen on f7.
 For example: 18...♗b4 19 b3 ♘g8
 20 d6+ wins.

18...♗xf7 19 ♗xf7 ♖f6 20 ♙f4

Sivokho is understandably not
 keen to wait for ...♗f8 and finds a
 way to extract his queen, but the
 position is now roughly level.

20...♗xf4 21 ♗xe7 e3 22 ♗xe3
 ♗xc4

Black has emerged with two pieces for the rook and an active position.

23 ♖c3 ♕d4 24 ♗xc7 ♖c8 25 ♗xb7 ♖xc3 26 bxc3 ♗xc3 27 ♖d1

The game is level because Black has to contend with the passed d-pawn rather than try to attack the white king.

The game concluded:

27...♙g4 28 ♖b1 ♗xa5 29 d6 ♙d7 30 h3 ♗f5 31 ♖a1 ♙b5 32 ♖e1 ♗d5 33 ♗c7 ♙c6 34 f3 ♙h7 35 ♗b8 ♙d7 36 ♖e7 ♗c5+ 37 ♙h1 ♗c1+ 38 ♙h2 ♗f4+ 39 ♙h1 ♗c1+ 40 ♙h2 ♗f4+ 41 ♙h1 ♗g5 42 ♗b1+ ♗g6 43 ♗b7 ♙b5 1/2-1/2

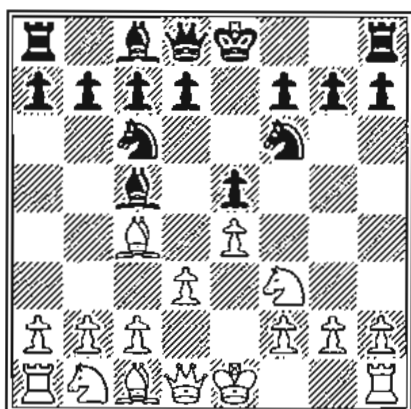
Conclusion

The game Lane-Paterson is a typical example of how Black can go wrong by playing too energetically against such a reliable opening. The trick with 8 ♖xe5 is certainly worth remembering and I myself have won a handful of

games with that star move. An attempted improvement on the line comes under pressure in Gwaze-Lyell. I think 9 ♖f3 might well be a big problem for Black and could easily present White with a gift of an easy victory. 6 a4 is introduced in the game Inkirov-Karadimov. The idea of gaining space on the queenside while providing the a2 square for the bishop, thus avoiding an exchange of pieces, is worth noting. Kogan - Sanahuja Palomo sees Black pinning the king's knight. I think this game is interesting because Black makes a speculative piece sacrifice on the kingside to strip away White's defences. Kogan defends well and finds a clever way to activate his queen. Najer-Odinokov includes a good idea in the form of 8 a5 so as to follow up with ♗b3 and avoid ...♖a5 forking the queen and bishop. The idea of 8 a5 is once again seen in the game Sivokho-Yemelin where Black plays 7...h6. White plays well but misses a killer move.

Closed Giuoco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4
 ♗f3 ♕c5



White wins

Lane -- Erwich
 Antwerp 1996

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♘c6 3 ♗f3 ♕c5 4
 c3 ♗f6 5 d3

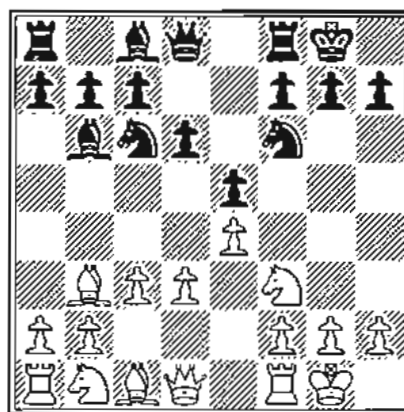
White resists entering the well known lines which occur after 5 d4. The emphasis instead is to develop rapidly and later advance the d-pawn to gain space.

Of course this position can also be reached by 1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 ♗f3 ♕c5 5 c3.

5...d6 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♖b3 ♖b6

History

The words Giuoco Piano mean 'Quiet Game' in Italian. This is why the present opening is widely known as the Italian Game in various sources. Indeed it has been around since the 15th century. The Closed version with the pawn on d3 exploded in popularity after Karpov played it in his 1981 world title match against Korchnoi. It has since become popular with players who want to play something reliable and yet like to create an attack in the middlegame.



The bishop steps back in anticipation of being attacked by d3-d4. Now 8 d4 could be reasonably met by 8...♕g4.

8 ♖e1 ♘a5 9 ♙c2

In this line it is usually a good idea to preserve the light-squared bishop for future attacks. In this case the argument is that the knight on the edge of the board can no longer exert its influence upon the centre.

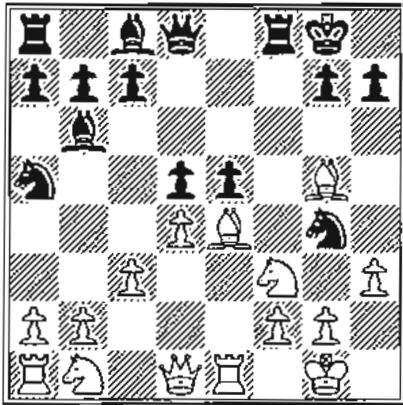
9...♘g4 10 d4

The threat to the f2 pawn is eliminated and now White would like to play 11 h3 to loosen the knight's protection of the e5 pawn.

10...f5?!

Erwich is understandably keen to play aggressively but it is to no avail because he does not have enough actively placed pieces.

11 h3 fxe4 12 ♙xe4 d5 13 ♙g5!



This in-between move ruins Black's ambitious plans. With the bishop thrust White strives to distract the black queen from its defence of the d5 pawn.

13...♘xf2

A bold attempt to complicate matters but careful analysis soon indicates that White is on top.

Other tries:

a) 13...♞d6 14 ♙e7 ♞xe7 15 ♙xd5+ ♙e6 16 ♙xe6+ ♞xe6 17 hxg4 ♞xg4 18 ♘xe5 leaves White with an extra pawn.

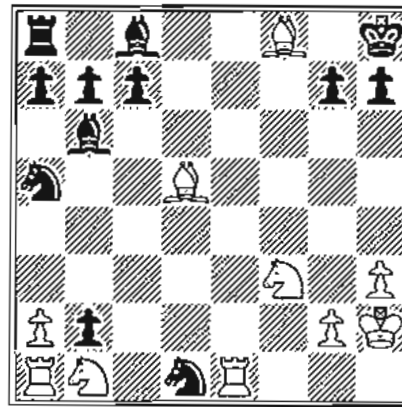
b) 13...♞d7 14 hxg4 dxe4 15 ♘xe5 is good for White.

c) 13...♘f6 14 ♙xh7+ ♚xh7 15 dxe5 wins back the piece, leaves Black's kingside in a mess and White a pawn up.

14 ♙xd8 ♘xd1 15 ♙xd5+ ♚h8 16 ♙e7 exd4

This is the start of a sneaky combination. The black pawn will be allowed to promote.

17 ♙xf8 dxc3+ 18 ♚h2 cxb2



19 ♖e8!

This is the reason why I allowed the black pawn to reach b2. I saw that the threat of back rank mate would save me.

19...♙e6 20 ♖xa8 ♙xd5 21 ♙a3+ ♙g8 22 ♙xb2 ♘xb2 23 ♘c3 c6 24 ♖e1 1-0

Another way to handle the position is to block the a2-g8 diagonal with 8...♙e6.

Zhang Pengxiang – Karpov
Moscow 2001

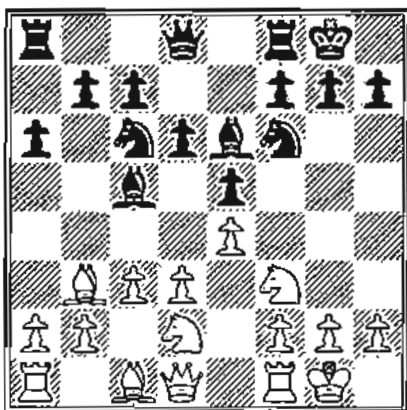
1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♘f6 3 d3 ♗c6 4 ♗f3 ♖c5 5 c3 d6 6 0-0 0-0

Black follows suit and makes sure his king is safe and introduces his king's rook into the action. The desire to trade pieces with 6...♗a5?! is flawed due to 7 ♖xf7+! ♔xf7 8 b4 when White regains his piece and holds the advantage because Black has had to forfeit the right to castle.

7 ♖b3

White retreats the bishop so that ...♗a5 can be met by ♖c2. Moreover if ...d5 is played then there will now be an option of just defending the e4 pawn.

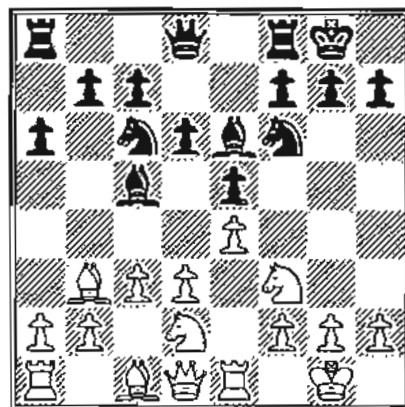
7...a6 8 ♗bd2 ♖e6



Black offers an exchange of the light-squared bishops to counter any exploitation of the a2-g8 diagonal by the ♖b3.

9 ♗c4

But White shields his bishop from exchange while activating his queen's knight. 9 ♖e1 is the main alternative:



a) 9...♖xb3 10 ♗xb3 ♗d7 (10...♖a7 11 ♖g5 intending d3-d4 with an edge) 11 ♗xc5 dxc5 12 ♖g5 f6 13 ♖e3 ♖f7 14 ♗b3 b6 15 d4 cxd4 16 cxd4 exd4 17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖xd4 ♗e7 19 ♖ad1 with the better prospects thanks to his space advantage, Nunn-Doyle, Marbella 1982.

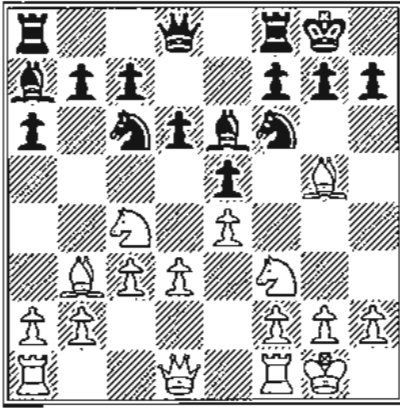
b) 9...♗g4 10 ♖e2 ♗d7 11 h3 ♗f6 12 ♗f1 ♖xb3 13 ♗xb3 ♗h5 14 g4 (perhaps 14 ♖e1 should be preferred so that 14...♗f4?! can be well met by 15 d4! ♖b6 16 ♖xf4 exf4 17 ♗d2 intending ♗c4 with the better chances) 14...♗f6 15 ♗g2 d5 16 ♗g3 dxe4 17 dxe4 ♗e6 18 ♗c2 ♖ad8 19 b4 ♖e7 20 a4 (White gains space on the queenside) 20...♗c4 21 ♗b2 b5 22 ♖e3 ♗e8 23 axb5 ♗xb5 24 ♗f5 ♖d7?! 25 ♗a2! ♗b8 26 c4 (the black queen is knocked off the fifth rank where it defends the e5 pawn) 26...♗xb4? 27 ♖a3 1-0 Lane-Vlahos, London 1987.

9...♖a7

The desire to initiate an exchange of pieces with 9...♖xc4?! is not clear while the dark-squared bishop remains on c5. For instance: 10

♙xc4 ♘a5 11 b4! (this is the difference compared to lines where the bishop has already retreated) 11...♘xc4 12 bxc5 ♘a5 13 ♖b1 with a slight advantage.

10 ♙g5!?



White wants to pin the king's knight. 10 a4 is the positional approach, then 10...h6 11 a5 ♘e7 12 ♖e1 ♘g6 13 ♙e3 ♙xc4 14 ♙xc4 ♙xe3 15 ♖xe3 c6 16 d4 with equal opportunities, Benjamin-Kaidanov, Salt Lake City 1999.

10...h6 11 ♙h4 ♖h7!?

Black aims for ...g5 but wants to play ...♖g8 first to avoid any sacrifices by White on g5. Instead Minasian-Mamedyarov, Dubai 2002, saw 11...g5. That game went 12 ♙g3 (12 ♘xg5!? hxg5 13 ♙xg5 ♖g7 14 ♘e3 is very tough to defend for Black but it is not that clear) 12...♙xc4 13 ♙xc4 ♘a5 14 ♘d2 h5 15 h4 ♘xc4 16 dxc4 ♘g4 17 ♘f3 when the weakened black kingside gave White the advantage.

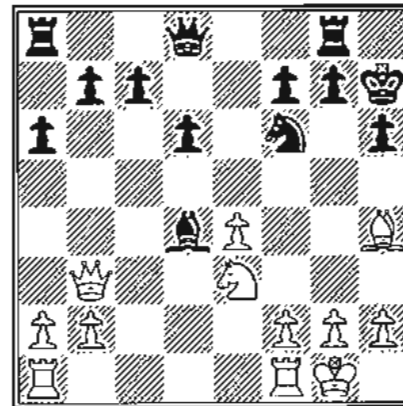
12 ♘e3 ♖g8 13 d4 exd4

13...g5 allows 14 d5! gxh4 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 ♙xe6 when the black king is too exposed.

14 cxd4 ♙xb3 15 ♖xb3 ♘xd4?

If a former World Champion can miss a tactic then it is highly likely that it will be repeated at club level. The correct way for Black to continue is to break the pin with 15...g5!? when play might continue: 16 ♙g3 (16 e5!? gxh4 17 ♖xf7+ ♖g7 18 ♖xf6 ♘xd4 19 ♘xd4 ♙xd4 20 ♘f5 ♖xf6 21 exf6 ♖g4 22 h3 ♖f4 with an equal ending) 16...g4!? (16...♘xe4 17 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 18 ♖e6 ♘f6 19 d5 favours White) 17 ♘d2 ♘xd4 18 ♖xf7+ ♖g7 19 ♖c4 ♘h5 with a double-edged game.

16 ♘xd4 ♙xd4



17 ♘f5?

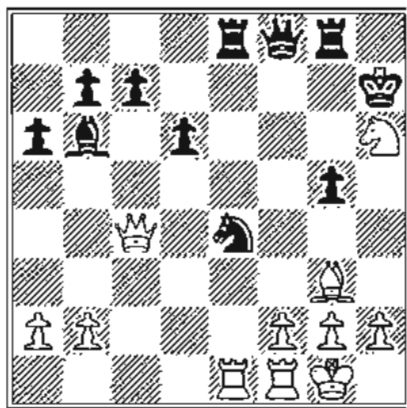
Well, this is good but White misses the knockout blow 17 ♖d3! which hits the bishop and threatens a discovered check by e4-e5. For instance: 17...♙xe3 (or 17...g5 18 e5+ ♖g6 19 ♖xd4 dxe5 20 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 21 ♙g3 wins) 18 e5+! ♖h8 19 exf6 g5 20 ♖xe3 when Black can resign because 20...gxh4 allows 21 ♖xh6 mate.

17...♙b6 18 ♖xf7

18 ♖ad1, threatening e4-e5 to take advantage of the pin on the d-file, is better for White.

18... ♖f8

The position is now equal.

19 ♖c4 ♜e8 20 ♜ae1 g5 21 ♔g3
♜xe4 22 ♜xh6!

22... ♜xh6?!

Perhaps 22... ♜xf2! is the best try when 23 ♖xg8+ (23 ♜xg8 ♜xe1 24 ♜xe1 ♜d3+ 25 ♜h1 ♜xe1 26 ♔xe1 ♖xg8 and Black is a pawn up) 23... ♖xg8 24 ♜xg8 ♜xe1 25 ♜xe1 ♜d3+ 26 ♜f1 ♜xe1 27 ♜f6+ ♔g6 28 ♜d5 ♜d3 gives Black the superior ending.

23 ♜xe4 ♖f5 24 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 25 h4

White intends to go after the black king which is badly exposed.

25... g4 26 ♔f4+ ♜h7?!

Though it looks daring, 26... ♜h5! is the safest place for the king and offers roughly equal chances after 27 ♔e3.

27 ♔e3! ♜e4 28 ♖b3 ♔xe3?

The problem with the exchange of pieces is that it allows the rook on f1 to join in the hunt for the black king.

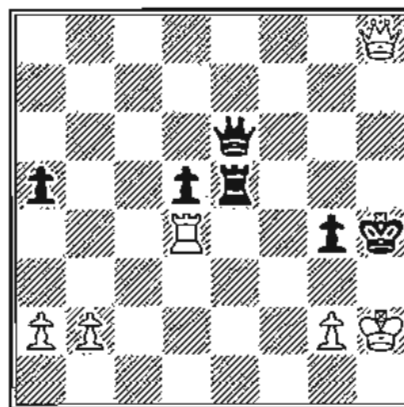
29 fxe3 ♖e6 30 ♖xb7 ♜xe3? 31 ♖xc7+ ♔g6 32 ♖c2+ ♖e4 33 ♖f2

White lines up on the f-file to target the king which is poorly defended.

33... ♖e6 34 ♖f4 ♜e5 35 ♔h2 a5 36 ♜d1 d5 37 ♜d4 ♔h5 38 ♖f8?!

38 b3 maintains the advantage.

38... ♔xh4! 39 ♖h8+



39... ♔g5?

The final mistake in a difficult position. 39... ♜h5 is the best bet when 40 ♖d8+ ♜g5 41 ♜f4 ♖e5 42 g3+ ♔h5 43 ♜f2 is equal.

40 ♖g7+ ♔h5 41 ♜xg4! ♖xg4 42 ♖xe5+ ♔g6 43 ♖g3 ♔f5 44 ♖xg4+ ♔xg4 45 ♔g1 1-0

Black resigned early because he can see the ending is lost. This is due to the fact that White can create a passed pawn on the queenside, which cannot be stopped unless the g-pawn is allowed to romp home to the eighth rank.

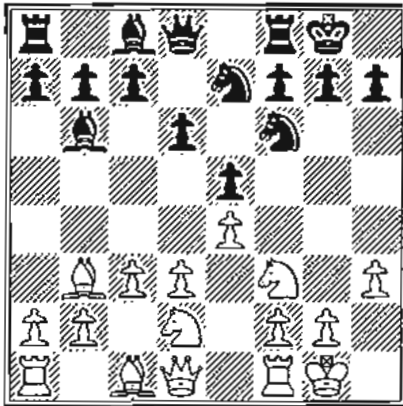
It is also possible for White to deal with 7... ♔b6 by developing the queen's knight.

Flores – Shabalov
Buenos Aires 2003

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♜f6 3 d3 ♜c6 4 ♜f3 ♖c5 5 c3 d6 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♖b3 ♖b6

Black's plan is to play ...♜e7-g6, ...c7-c6 allowing the bishop to support the central pawns with ...♖c7 if required.

8 ♜bd2 ♜e7 9 h3



White is wary of moving the king's rook first because that will allow ...♜g4 so he eradicates this possibility for Black.

9...c6 10 ♖e1 ♜g6 11 ♜f1

White's plan is similar in most of these lines and is to transfer the queen's knight to the kingside where it will usually emerge on g3 depending on how Black replies. Now if Black tries the obvious 11...♜f4 it is well met by 12 d4.

11...♜h5!?

Instead:

a) 11...h6 is the quiet approach. 12 d4 ♖e8 13 ♜g3 ♖e6 14 ♖e3 with roughly equal chances.

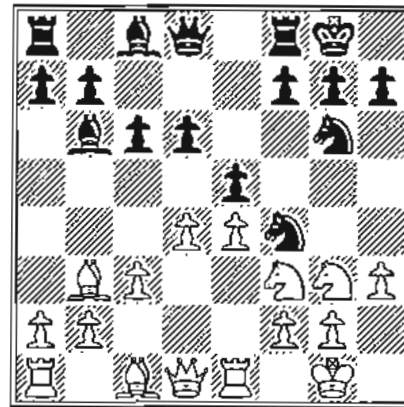
b) 11...♖e6 12 ♜g3 ♖e8 13 ♖xe6 fxe6 (13...♖xe6 is also possible but

does not cover the f5 square, thus allowing White to gain space with 14 ♜f5) 14 ♖b3 h6 15 ♖e3 ♜d7 16 ♖ad1 when White prepares d3-d4 with level chances, Jonkman-Sasikiran, Vlissingen 2004.

12 d4

The chance to attack the h5 knight with 12 ♜xe5?! backfires. Upon 12...♜xe5, 13 ♖xh5 is strongly met by 13...♜xd3 14 ♖e2 ♖f6 with the better position.

12...♜hf4 13 ♜g3



13...♖f6?

Shabalov is arguably the USA's strongest player but he still walks into a classic trap, which is a feature of this line. Also possible:

a) 13...h6? 14 ♖xf4 exf4 (14...♜xf4 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 17 ♜xe5 ♖d2 18 ♖f1 when the threat to the f7 pawn gives White the initiative) 15 ♜h5 with an edge.

b) 13...♖e7! is probably the best idea to add support to the e5 pawn. Then the position is roughly equal after 14 ♜f5.

14 ♜h5!

A clever idea which relies on the fact that the knight is taboo because

14...♖xh5 allows 15 ♔g5 trapping the queen. Black is obliged to go on the defensive.

14...♖e7 15 ♖xf4 exf4

Now that the black pawn is no long challenging d4 White has a decent centre, which makes the bishop on b6 less effective.

16 e5 ♔c7

If 16...d5, White can activate the bishop with 17 ♔c2. Then the rook on f8 cannot move otherwise ♔xg6 will remove the defender of the f4 pawn.

17 exd6 ♖xd6 18 ♖g5!

White is poised to attack with ♖h5 if given the chance.

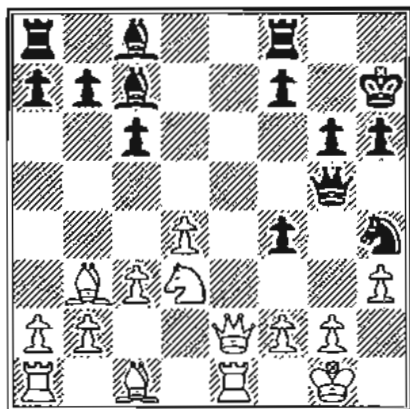
18...h6 19 ♖e4 ♖d8 20 ♖h5 ♖h7 21 ♖c5?

Flores lets the advantage slip with this careless move. It is better to step up the pressure with 21 ♔c2 ♖e8 22 ♔d2 ♔e6 and only now that the queen's bishop has moved play 23 ♖c5 so that the b7 pawn is attacked.

21...♖h4!? 22 ♖d3

Of course 22 ♔xf7?? allows 22...g6.

22...g6 23 ♖e2 ♖g5!



Shabalov has seized the initiative by threatening mate in one.

24 g3 ♔xh3!

There is nothing to be gained from meekly retreating with 24...♖f5 25 ♔xf4 ♖xg3 26 fxg3 ♔xf4 27 ♖xf4 ♖xg3+ 28 ♖g2 ♔xh3 29 ♖f2 when the danger is over and Black only has two pawns for the piece.

25 ♖xf4?

White underestimates the tactical possibilities and misses a trick. 25 ♔xf4 is the best try because it co-ordinates the rooks and consequently cuts out the tactics. Then 25...♖f5! 26 ♖e4 (26 ♔xc7 ♖f3+ 27 ♖h1 ♖ae8 28 ♖xe8 ♖xe1! wins due to the threat of ...♖f3+) 26...♖ae8 27 ♖xf5 ♖f3+ 28 ♖h1 ♔xf5 29 ♔xc7 ♔xd3 30 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 31 ♖g2 with equal chances.

25...♖fe8! 26 ♖e6

In difficult circumstances 26 ♖xh3 offers the only hope but after 26...♖f5 27 ♖f4 ♖xe2 28 ♖xe2 ♔d6 Black is still favourite to win.

26...♖f6 27 gxh4 ♔xe6

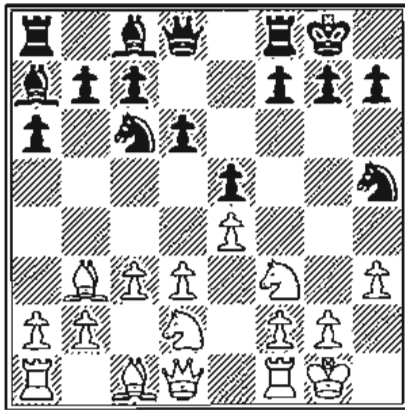
If you count the material it is equal but the wrecked pawn structure and the exposed white king is a sure sign that Black is on top.

28 ♔e3 ♖xh4 29 ♖f3 ♔f5 30 ♖h1 ♔h3 31 ♔d1 ♖e4 0-1

The tricky knight move which Shabalov missed is something that should be remembered. Here is another example:

Tishin – Geller
Samara 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♗c6 4 ♗f3 ♖c5 5 c3 d6 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♖b3 a6 8 ♗bd2 ♖a7 9 h3 ♗h5



The knight ventures to the side of the board in order to occupy the influential f4 square. At the British Championships in 1988, the future FIDE World Champion, Anand, tried 9...♖h8 against me, which is usually an indication that Black is trying to advance the f-pawn. That game went 10 ♖e1 ♗h5 11 ♗f1 (11 ♗xe5? is met by 11...♗h4 with a clear advantage) 11...♗f6 12 ♖e3 ♗f4 13 d4 ♗e7 14 ♖h2 with equal chances although Black eventually won.

10 ♖e1

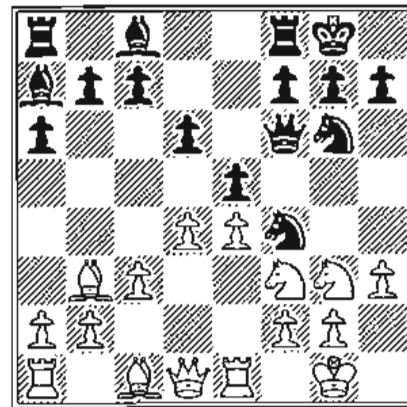
White just carries on as usual and centralises the king's rook. Instead 10 ♗xe5, to reveal a hidden attack on the h5 knight, gives Black no worries: 10...♗xe5 11 ♗xh5 ♗xd3 12 ♗f3 ♗f6 (12...♗xc1 13 ♗g5! looks very aggressive but will end in a draw after 13...h6 14 ♗xf7 ♗xb3 15 ♗xh6+ gxh6 16 ♗g6+

with perpetual check) 13 ♖g5 ♗g6 14 ♗xg6 hxg6 15 ♖ad1 ♗c5 16 ♖c2 ♖e8 17 ♖fe1 f6 with equal chances, Macieja-Adams, Reykjavik 2003.

10...♗f4 11 ♗f1 ♗f6 12 d4

12 ♖e3 White is content to exchange dark-squared bishops because the one on a7 is usually an aggressive piece. 12...♗e7 13 ♗g3 ♗eg6? 14 ♗h5! gives White an edge and is an echo of the main game, Lakos-Krupkova, Zanka 1995. If 12 ♖xf4 ♗xf4 then the bishop on a7 is a menace for White because it cannot be opposed by a white bishop. After 13 ♗e3 ♗e7 14 ♗h2 ♖e6 the chances are roughly equal, Van Enk - Khachian, Agoura Hills 2004.

12...♗e7 13 ♗g3 ♗eg6



14 ♗h5!

A fantastic idea which promotes a positive exchange of pieces in White's favour. This is because 14...♗xh5? allows 15 ♖g5 trapping the black queen. Of course the idea was seen in the previous main game, thus emphasising the fact that it is a trick worth remembering.

14...♖e7 15 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 16 ♘xf4
exf4

The pawn on f4 is now a long-term weakness whereas the a7-bishop's pressure on the d4 pawn is reduced to a minimum.

17 ♖d2 ♖f6 18 e5 dxe5 19 ♗xe5
♗d7 20 ♗ae1 c5 21 d5?!

White should accept the offer of the pawn with 21 dxc5 which has the merit of shutting out the bishop on a7 when 21...♗c6 22 ♘d4 gives White the advantage.

21...♗ad8 22 ♗c2 ♗b8 23 ♗5e2
g6 24 b3 b5 25 c4

The chances are even because the passed d-pawn cannot advance without becoming a target. The game concluded:

25...♗c7 26 ♗d3 ♗fe8 27 ♖c2
♗a5 28 ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 29 ♗e2 ♗c3
30 cxb5 axb5 31 a4 bxa4 32 bxa4
♗f8 33 a5 ♗xd5 34 a6 ♗d8 35 ♗e4
♖xa6

35...♗b4! is slightly better for Black.

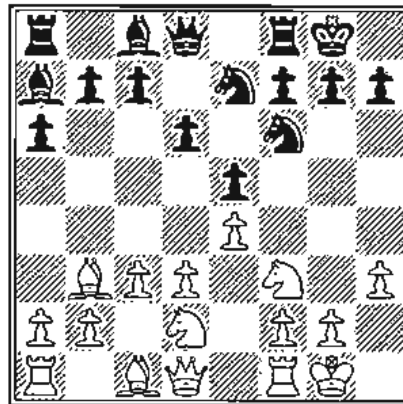
36 ♖xc3 ♖xe2 37 ♖h8+ ♗e7 38
♖e5+ ♗f8 ½-½

It is also possible to transfer the queen's knight rapidly to the kingside by 9...♗e7.

Lane – Sarfati

Australian Open 1999

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♗f6 3 d3 ♗c6 4
♗f3 ♗c5 5 c3 d6 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♗b3
a6 8 ♗bd2 ♗a7 9 h3 ♗e7



Black signals his intention to play ♗e7-g6 with the aim of occupying the f4 square.

10 ♗e1

As usual in this line White makes room for the queen's knight to transfer to the kingside via f1-g3. The rook also plays a useful role in preventing ...d6-d5 because after capturing on d5 with the pawn the rook would attack the e5 pawn.

10...♗g6 11 ♗f1 ♗e6

Also possible:

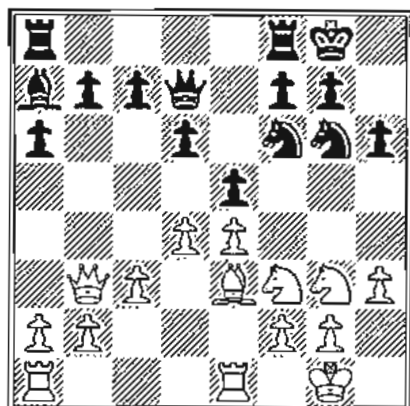
a) 11...♗h5 12 ♗g5 ♖e8
(12...♗f6 13 ♗h4 gives White a slight edge) 13 ♗h4 ♗hf4 14 ♗xg6
♗xg6 15 ♗g3 ♗e6 16 ♗f5 ♖d7 17
♖g4 gave White attacking chances in Lane-Zinina, Cappelle la Grande 1995.

b) 11...h6 12 ♗g3 ♗e8 13 d4 is roughly equal although the greater space makes it easier for White to manoeuvre.

12 ♗g3 h6 13 d4

I am happy playing these sort of positions because White has a space advantage, allowing him to activate his pieces smoothly while Black is slightly cramped.

13...♖d7 14 ♗e3 ♗xb3 15 ♖xb3



The exchange of light-squared bishops means that that f5 square is available for a white knight and the queen's rook can now be centralised. However Black simply wanted to exchange pieces to relieve his passive position.

15...♖fe8 16 ♖ad1 ♕c6 17 ♕c2 b5 18 ♕c1

With some ideas about sacrificing the bishop h6 after I had played ♘f5.

18...♔h7 19 ♘f5 ♘g8 20 ♕d2 ♕b7

Sarfati attacks the e-pawn but I took the view that the queen was further from the kingside where the main action will take place.

21 dxe5 ♗xe3 22 ♖xe3 ♘xe5 23 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 24 f4 ♖e6

Or 24...♖xe4 25 ♕c2 ♘f6 (if 25...♖xe3 then 26 ♘xd6+ wins) 26 ♘g3 favours White because the rook on e4 is pinned.

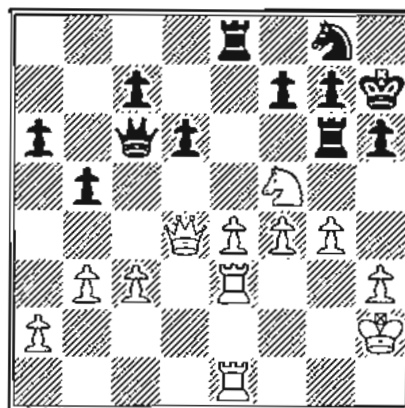
25 ♕d4

It might be a mate in one threat but it indicates that White now has the initiative.

25...♖g6 26 ♔h2 ♖e8 27 ♖de1 ♕c6 28 b3

I didn't want the tension to be relieved yet by ...♕c4, offering to trade queens.

28...♖f6 29 g4 ♖g6



30 ♕d5!

A golden rule for an attacker is not to be afraid to enter an ending should the position dictate. This is particularly true if it also offers the best prospects of victory.

30...♕d7

Or 30...♕xd5 31 exd5 ♖xe3 32 ♖xe3 with the key point that with the pawn now on d5 Black's rook cannot occupy the e-file.

31 e5 ♖ge6 32 ♘d4 ♘f6

Black is in a difficult situation because 32...♖g6 33 f5 ♖g5 34 ♘f3 traps the rook.

33 ♕f3 dxe5 34 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 35 fxe5 ♘g8 36 ♖d1

White is clearly winning and now the road to victory is to increase the pressure.

36...♕e8 37 ♕d5 c6 38 ♕d7 ♕b8 39 ♖d6 ♕b6 40 ♖d4

In time-trouble I wanted to avoid complications but the easiest way to win is 40 ♖xe6! when 40...♕xe3 41

♖xf7 ♖e2+ 42 ♔g3 ♖e3+ 43 ♖f3
 ♖g1+ 44 ♔h4 avoids the checks
 and leaves Black struggling.

40...♘e7 41 ♔h1 a5 42 ♜de4
 ♖c5 43 ♖d4 ♖a3 44 ♖d2 ♘g6 45
 ♜f3 ♜e7 46 e6 fxe6 47 ♖c2 e5 48
 h4 ♔g8 49 h5 ♘f4 50 ♖d2 ♖c5 51
 ♜xf4 1-0

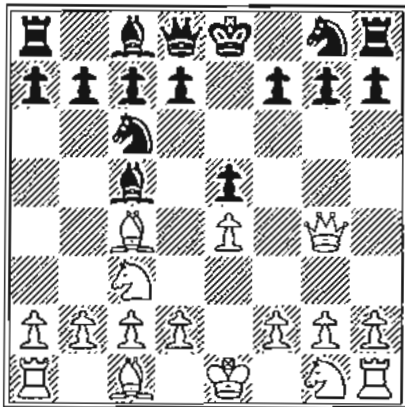
Conclusion

Lane-Erwich is a demonstration of how Black can go wrong by playing too energetically in the opening and prematurely advancing the f-pawn. The idea of blocking White's traditionally strong bishop

is explored in Zhang Pengxiang - Karpov. White misses a nice tactic, which would have forced the former world champion to resign straight out of the opening. Flores-Shabalov explores how White usually develops in this line and also the surprising thrust 14 ♘h5, which gives White the initiative. Tishin-Geller is another sharp encounter and it is possible to spot the star move. The theme of Black transferring the queen's knight to the kingside is examined in the game Lane-Sarfati. White strives for a space advantage out of the opening and gradually increases the pressure on Black.

Vienna Copycat

1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 ♔c5 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 ♚g4!



Giving the game an independent character. This is a chance for White to transpose into another opening especially as Black is just imitating White's opening moves. This copycat strategy comes under pressure from the surprising queen move.

History

Hamppe's Game was the name originally given to the sequence 1 e4 e5 2 ♘c3. Carl Hamppe (1814-76) was a Swiss player who was a government official in Vienna and spent his spare time in chess cafes. The success of the opening prompted Ernst Falkbeer to write an article on the opening in the magazine *Wiener Schachzeitung*

which he started in 1857, with the title *Hamppe'sche Spiel-Eröffnung*. In those days this opening was often seen as a good excuse to play a delayed King's Gambit after 2...♘c6 3 f4. Indeed, the Hamppe-Allgaier Gambit is a lasting tribute to one of the pioneers of the opening. The city of Vienna was renowned as a centre of chess excellence and this led to numerous players taking up the Hamppe Game and finding some improvements. Documentation of this came in 1893 when Curt von Bardeleben's booklet *Die Wiener Partie* was published in Leipzig. This consolidated the name of the opening as the Vienna which has stuck ever since. The theory of the opening has steadily developed, helped along by a succession of famous names playing and writing about the opening. All of which has certainly had a lasting effect because nowadays the opening is played at the highest level as well as being a firm favourite with club players.

White wins

I think the copycat game mentioned in the introduction could well be repeated:

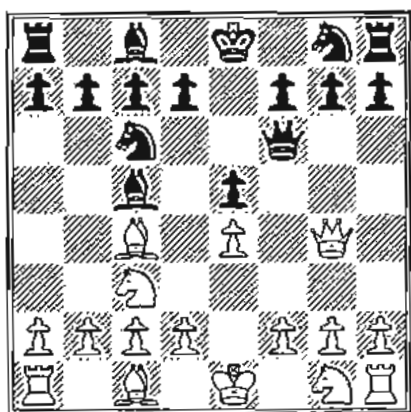
Nguyen Hoang Hiep – Hooi Ming Yew

Asian Junior Championships,
Singapore 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♕c4 ♕c5 3 ♖c3 ♖c6 4 ♗g4!

Though it looks odd, here we have a special case where a queen can be developed early in the game.

4...♗f6?



A classic mistake. Black defends the g7 pawn and threatens to start his own attack with ...♗xf2+ but the only problem is that a well prepared player with the White pieces will be ready to strike.

5 ♖d5!

The start of a brilliant attack that has been known for years but still continues to catch people out. At this point White can happily start thinking about winning the brilliancy prize.

5...♗xf2+

Black has to carry on attacking because defending the c7 pawn with 5...♗d8 fails to 6 ♗xg7 winning easily.

6 ♖d1 ♖f8

The alternatives look bleak for Black:

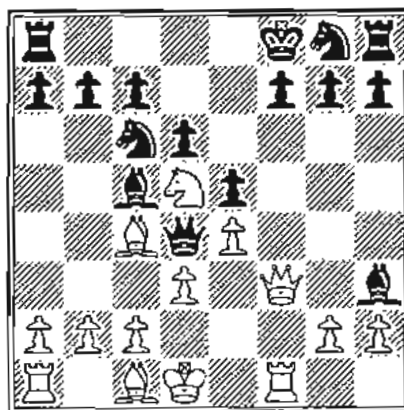
a) 6...♖f6? 7 ♗xg7 ♖g8? (7...♖xd5 8 ♗xh8 ♕f8 9 exd5 ♗xg2 10 dxc6 d6 11 cxb7 ♕g4+ 12 ♖e1 is winning for White, Fidelity-Shirazi, Somerset 1986.) 8 ♖xf6+ ♖d8 9 ♗xg8+ ♖e7 10 ♗xf7+ ♖d6 11 ♖e8 mate, Swiercz-Guille, La Fere 2003.

b) 6...g6 7 ♖h3 ♗d4 8 d3 ♕d6 9 c3 ♗c5 10 b4 when White is already winning, Milla de Marco – Rodriguez Alvarez, Orense 2002.

7 ♖h3 ♗d4 8 d3 d6

Or 8...♕b6 9 ♗f3 f6 10 c3. As usual White gains time by chasing the queen around the board. For instance: 10...♗c5 11 b4 ♗d6 12 a4 a5 13 ♖xb6 cxb6 14 bxa5 bxa5 15 ♕a3 1-0 Ip-Benassayag, Brie Comte 2002.

9 ♗f3 ♕xh3 10 ♖f1!



The rook comes across to the f-file and it finally dawns on Black that he is busted! The threat now is mate on f7 and also the sly c2-c3 trapping the black queen in the middle of the board. I think this is the move that is understandably

overlooked when Black embarks on 4...♖f6.

10...♙g4

A desperate attempt at survival. There have been numerous games in this line and I added to the number with Lane-Lack, Brussels rapidplay 2000, which concluded 10...♙e6 11 c3 ♖g1 12 ♗xg1 ♙xg1 13 ♜xc7 1-0.

11 ♖xg4 ♙b6 12 c3 ♖c5 13 ♙e3 ♖a5 14 ♜xb6 ♜f6

If 14...axb6 then 15 ♗xf7+ ♚e8 16 ♖d7 mate.

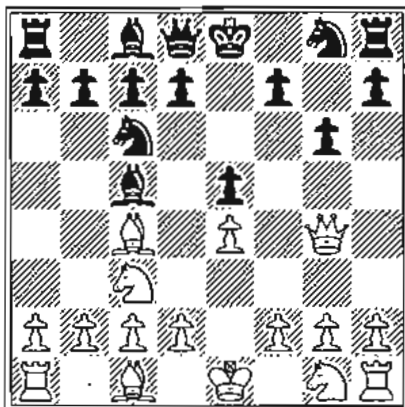
15 ♗xf6 1-0

Once Black is stunned by 4 ♖g4 he will need to find a way to deal with the threat to the g7 pawn. The next game shows another version of defence:

Kosteniuk – Bouchaud

Oz.com Internet 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♙c5 3 ♜c3 ♜c6 4 ♖g4 g6



The immediate problem of defending the g7 pawn is solved but the long-term problem is that the

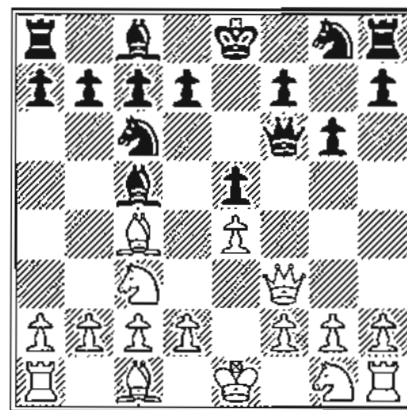
dark squares on the kingside will be weak because the protective bishop is far away on c5.

5 ♖f3 ♖f6

Black offers a trade of queens to relieve the pressure. Also possible:

a) 5...f6 6 d3 ♜d4 7 ♖d1 c6 8 ♜ge2 ♜e7 9 ♜xd4 ♙xd4 10 ♙h6 with slightly the better chances because Black will find it difficult to castle kingside, Kosteniuk-Aigner, Internet 2000.

b) 5...♜f6 6 ♜ge2 d6 7 d3 (instead 7 h3 ♜d4 8 ♜xd4 ♙xd4 9 ♜b5 gave White a slight edge in the game West-Levi, Melbourne 1993) 7...♙g4 8 ♖g3 ♖d7 9 ♖h4! ♜h5 10 f3 ♙e6 11 g4 ♙xc4 12 dxc4 ♜g7 (or 12...♜b4 13 ♚d1 ♜g7 14 a3 ♜a6 15 ♜d5 is good news for White) 13 ♜d5 ♚f8 14 ♙h6 ♜b4 15 ♙xg7+ ♚xg7 16 ♖f6+ ♚g8 17 ♜e7+ and Black was busted in Ladegaard-Guldberg, Aalborg 1995.

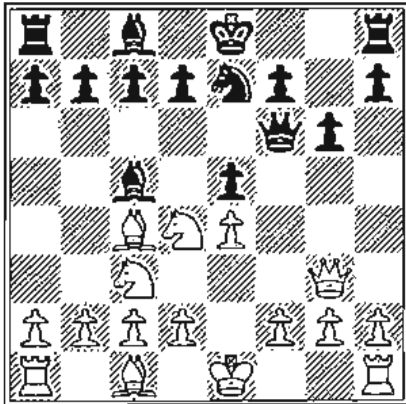


6 ♖g3

The woman grandmaster decides to keep the queens on the board to increase her attacking options. The alternative 6 ♜d5 is perfectly acceptable. For instance: 6...♖xf3 7

♖xf3 ♙b6 8 ♜b4 d6 9 a4 a5
 (9...♗ge7 is not good enough as 10
 ♜f6+ ♜f8 11 a5 ♜xb4 12 ♙a4!
 gives White a clear advantage) 10
 b5 ♜d8 11 ♙a3 threatening 12
 ♜xb6 cxb6 13 ♙xb6 prompting
 Black to compromise his position.
 11...♜d7 12 ♜xb6+ cxb6 13 d4!
 and the combination of superior
 development and tactical threats
 against the weak d6 pawn gives
 White a big advantage, Ganguly-
 Pohle, Shenyang 1999.

6...♗ge7 7 ♗ge2 ♜d4 8 ♜xd4



8...♙xd4!?

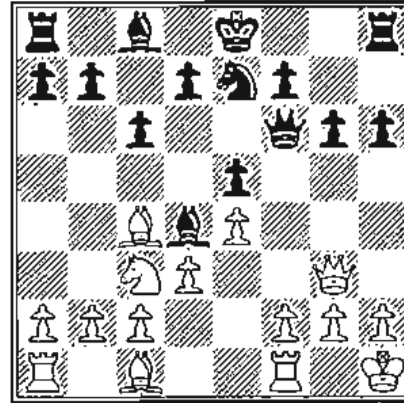
Perhaps 8...exd4 needs to be
 tested when 9 ♜b5 is met by
 9...0-0! whereupon play might
 continue 10 d3! aiming to exploit
 the dark squares on g5 and h6 (10
 ♜xc7? ♙d6 or 10 0-0 a6 11 ♜a3
 b5; 10 ♜xc7 d6 11 0-0? a6 12 ♜a3
 b5 13 ♙b3 ♙a7 win for Black)
 10...a6? 11 ♜xc7 ♙d6 12 ♜g5
 ♜xg5 13 ♙xg5 winning.

9 d3 h6

Black stops the bishop coming to
 g5 but this means that now he can't
 easily castle kingside because the

pawn would be lost due to ♙xh6.
 The obvious 9...0-0? runs into the
 combination 10 ♙g5 ♜d6 11 ♜b5
 ♜b4+ 12 c3 ♜xb2 13 0-0! when
 Black must lose material.

10 0-0 c6 11 ♜h1



White prepares f2-f4 to open the
 f-file for the benefit of her king's
 rook.

11...♙xc3 12 bxc3 d5 13 exd5
 ♜xd5 14 ♙d2

White gets the bishop into the
 action and co-ordinates the rooks. In
 fact 14 ♙e1, putting pressure on the
 e-pawn, is very strong. For
 example: 14...♙e6 15 ♙xd5 cxd5
 16 ♙xe5 0-0-0 17 ♙e3 with victory
 in sight.

14...♜b6 15 ♙b3 ♙e6 16 ♙ae1
 ♜d7 17 f4!

This is in keeping with the
 original plan of bringing the king's
 rook into play.

17...♙xb3 18 fxe5 ♜e6 19 axb3
 0-0-0 20 ♜f2

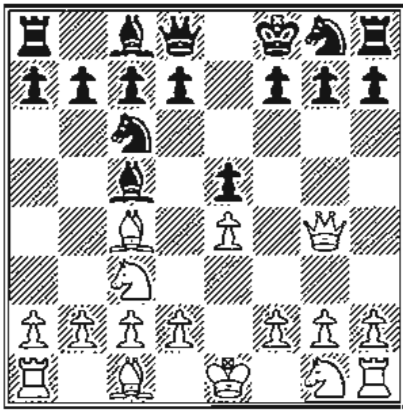
Eyeing up the a7 and f7 pawns -
 Black must now suffer.

20...♙df8 21 ♜xa7 g5 22 c4 c5
 23 b4 ♜xe5 24 ♜xc5+ 1-0

There is another defence with 4...♔f8 but it is regarded as a serious compromise because Black gives up the right to castle:

Anand – Ravisekhar
New Delhi 1986

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗c5 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 ♗g4 ♔f8



The king defends the g-pawn. Incidentally 4...♗f8 has even been played by someone who was honest enough to admit he'd made a mistake! I would suggest in reply 5 ♗g3 with similar play to the game.

5 ♗g3

The queen must move because the threat is ...d7-d5 uncovering an attack on the queen. It is also possible to threaten mate with 5 ♗f3 when the game Chow-Rujevic, Melbourne 2003, continued 5...♗f6 6 ♖ge2 d6 7 d3 ♗g4 8 ♗g3 h6?! 9 f4 exf4 10 ♗xf4 ♗d4? (10...♗xe2 is a better idea as after 11 ♗xe2 ♗a5 12 ♗b3 ♗xb3 13 axb3 ♗h5 14 ♗f3 ♗xf4 15 ♗xf4 ♗g5 there is only a slight edge in it) 11 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 12 ♗f2 ♗e6 13 ♗e3 with much the better position.

5...d6

Or 5...♗f6 6 ♖ge2 d6 7 d3 h6 8 ♗a4 ♗b6 9 ♗xb6 axb6 10 f4 (a recurring theme in this line is to open the f-file for the king's rook) 10...♗e7 11 0-0 with decent attacking chances, Rogers-Olarasu, Saint Vincent 2001.

6 ♖ge2 ♗d4

6...h5 has been tried in order to harass the white queen but 7 h4 puts an end to such ambitions.

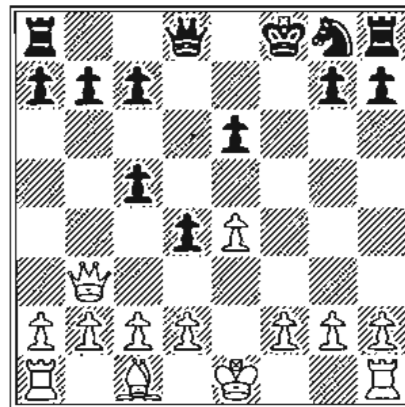
7 ♗xd4 exd4

Instead 7...♗xd4 is met by 8 ♗e2 when 8...♗c5 9 d3 ♗f6 10 0-0, intending ♗h1 and f2-f4, offers good attacking chances because Black has trouble co-ordinating his pieces.

8 ♗a4 ♗e6

8...♗b4 9 c3 (9 ♗b3 ♗a5 10 ♗xf7 ♗e7! is better for Black) 9...dxc3 10 dxc3 ♗a5 11 ♗d3, threatening ♗d5, gives White the brighter prospects.

9 ♗xe6 fxe6 10 ♗xc5 dxc5 11 ♗b3



White has the initiative because he is attacking the b7 and e6 pawns. Of course, the fact that the black

king cannot castle out of danger is also crucial.

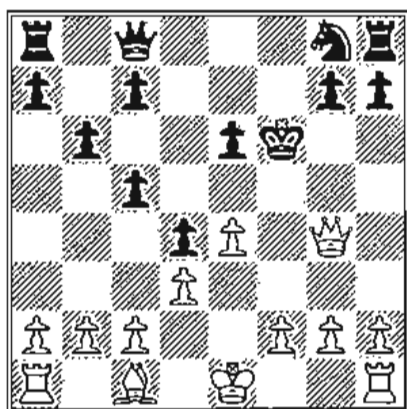
11...♖c8 12 ♖f3+ ♔e7

The king looks silly here but 12...♔e8 walks into 13 ♖h5+ when 13...♔e7 14 ♖xc5+ wins comfortably.

13 ♖g3 ♔f7 14 ♖f4+ ♔g6 15 ♖g4+ ♔f6 16 d3

White now prepares to introduce the bishop into the attack.

16...b6



17 h4

I think White can step up the pressure with 17 e5+! ♔xe5? (17...♔f7 18 ♖f3+ ♔e8 19 ♔g5 looks fun for White) 18 ♖xg7+ ♔f6 19 ♔g5 ♖f8 20 ♔xf6+ ♖xf6 21 f4+ ♔f5 22 g4+ ♔xf4 23 ♖xf6+ winning.

17...♔f7 18 ♖f3+ ♔e8 19 ♖h5+ ♔f8 20 ♔g5 ♖e8

Black is struggling but at least his queen is now back in the action and he can hope to trade pieces in order to weaken the onslaught.

21 ♖f3+ ♖f7 22 ♖g3 ♔f6 23 0-0-0

Anand has developed comfortably but Black is still in a difficult

position because his pieces lack harmony.

23...h6 24 ♔d2 ♔g8 25 ♔b1 ♖f8 26 ♖h3 ♖h7 27 h5 ♔h8

Or 27...g6? 28 hxg6 ♖xg6 29 ♖xe6+ winning.

28 f4 ♔g8 29 g4 e5 30 g5 hxg5

30...exf4? is not possible due to 31 g6 forking the queen and rook.

31 fxg5 g6 32 ♖df1 ♖e8 33 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 34 h6

White is winning because his passed h-pawn is a constant reminder that endings favour him and that the black king is on the verge of a mating attack. The game concluded:

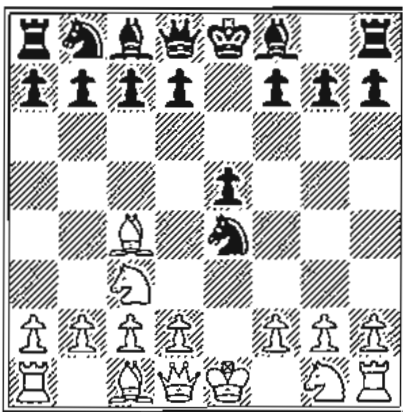
34...♖e8 35 b3 a5 36 ♔e1 ♖e7 37 ♔d2 ♖f7 38 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 39 ♖xf1 ♔h7 40 ♔b2 ♖e8 41 a4 ♖e7 42 ♖f3 ♔h8 43 ♖g4 ♔h7 44 ♔e1 c6 45 ♔g3 b5 46 ♔e1 bxa4 47 bxa4 c4 48 dxc4 c5 49 ♔xa5 ♖b7+ 50 ♔c1 ♔e7 51 ♖e6 ♔c6 52 ♔d2 ♖c7 53 ♖f6 ♖d7 54 a5 ♖c7 55 a6 ♔b8 56 ♔a5 ♖d7 57 ♔d8 1-0

Conclusion

The games in this chapter show how awkward it is for Black, after copying White's bishop development on move two, to defend the unprotected g7 pawn against an early attack by ♖g4. In fact Black never recovers from the difficulties incurred by a subsequent enforced clumsy queen placement, exposed king in the centre and weakening of the kingside. In all three examples the opening of the f-file is a key factor in White's brilliant exploitation of these advantages.

Vienna with 3...♞f6

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♞f6 3 ♝c3 ♞xe4



History

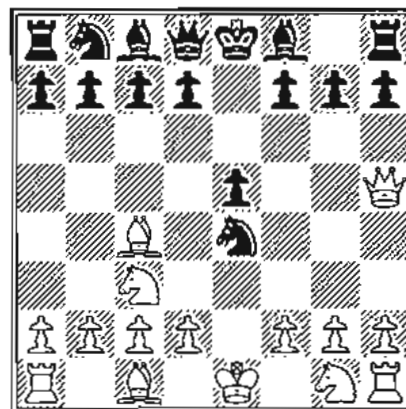
A popular way to counter White's opening strategy is by this pseudo-sacrifice of the knight with a view to simplification. But in fact it invites wild complications that can lead to sharp variations and entertaining games. It was first extensively analysed in 1907 by Hamlich, Marco and Wolf in the *Wiener Schachzeitung* and attracted a lot of attention. The variation featured in many international games and Spielmann exclaimed "That 3 ♘c4 accomplishes nothing is shown in all textbooks. Black temporarily sacrifices a knight and obtains a sufficiently even game." This statement is taken by some commentators as an absolute truth

but things are not so easy for Black. White can look for wild complications in the delightfully named Frankenstein-Dracula Variation. Naturally, it is also possible to consider a more restrained approach, which is also considered.

White wins

Kuipers – Janssen
Dieren 2004

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♞f6 3 ♝c3 ♞xe4 4 ♖h5



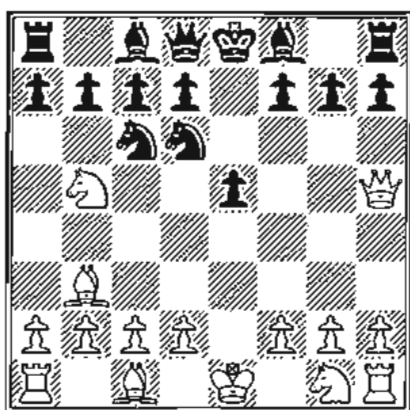
The first threat is mate in one! Another attacking move to be tested is 4 ♘xf7+ which looks good at first glance because Black is prevented from castling. However, practice has shown that the black king is quite safe and White gains nothing.

For instance: 5 ♟xe4 d5 (5...♟c6 6 ♞f3+ ♟g8?? 7 ♟g5 is decisive due to the twin threats of ♞d5 and ♞f7) 6 ♞h5+ ♟g8 7 ♟g3 ♟c6 8 d3 g6 9 ♞d1 ♟g7 10 ♟f3 h6 with equal chances, C.Renner-J.Schwarz, Waldshut 1991. A spirited attempt to play for tactics is achieved by 4 ♟f3 which transposes to the Boden-Kieseritzky Gambit.

4...♟d6 5 ♟b3 ♟c6

Black invites a sharp tactical line. In the 1970s correspondence master Tim Harding dubbed this line the Frankenstein-Dracula Variation. He jokingly argued that if the Frankenstein monster and Count Dracula were to sit down to play a game such a wild line involving a rook sacrifice would appeal to them.

6 ♟b5



The start of a forcing line which provides White with plenty of attacking chances and challenges Black to prove himself a master of defence. The first threat is mate in two by 7 ♟xd6+ ♟xd6 8 ♞xf7 mate.

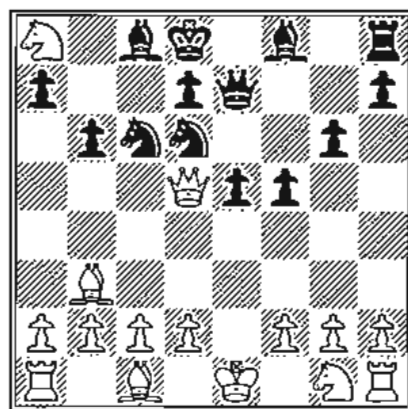
6...g6

Black has to be careful because the rook sacrifice proposed by 6...♞e7? is premature and good for White, e.g. 8 ♟xc7+ ♟d8 9 ♟xa8 b6 10 ♟xb6 axb6 11 d3 ♟b7 12 ♟e3 winning.

7 ♞f3 f5 8 ♞d5

White returns to the theme of threatening mate in two.

8...♞e7 9 ♟xc7+ ♟d8 10 ♟xa8 b6



A crazy looking position which has been tested numerous times but it is still baffling players of both the white and black pieces!

11 d3

The d-pawn is advanced to allow the queen's bishop to join the action because in this line White is constantly trying to catch up with his development. In the game Simmons-Hector, Jersey 2003, White tried 11 h4 intending an independent approach. There followed 11...♟b7 12 ♞f3 (12 d3 transposes to the main game) 12...♟xa8 13 ♟e2 ♟g7 14 ♞h3 (as usual White has to indulge in a dance with the queen otherwise it will come under attack) 14...♞f8 15

♖c3 ♖d4 16 0-0 f4 17 d3 ♜f5! (the rook is ready to swing across to h5 in order to target the h4-pawn) 18 ♜e1 (perhaps 18 ♖d5!? needs to be considered) 18...♜h5 19 ♕xf4? (it seems good to take advantage of the pin on the e-file but Black has seen further) 19...♜xh4 20 ♖g3 ♖6f5 21 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♖f3+ 23 gxf3 ♖xe5 0-1 Simmons-Hector, Jersey 2003.

11...♕b7 12 h4

The obvious threat is ♕g5 to pin the queen.

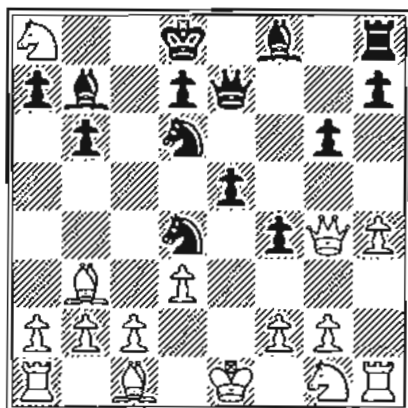
12...f4

Black blocks the white-squared bishop on c1. The alternative 12...h6 is seen in the next game.

13 ♖f3

It is now assumed by some strong players that White is better off by refraining from grabbing a pawn with 13 ♖xb6 axb6 14 ♖f3 ♖d4 15 ♖g4 on the basis that the extra move required by Black to take on a8 could prove to be crucial.

13...♖d4 14 ♖g4



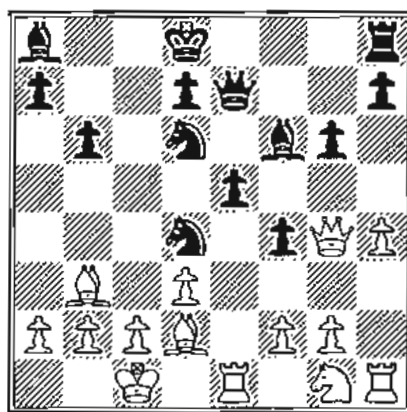
14...♕xa8

The old move 14...♕h6 has been condemned by the experts after

John Nunn provided some analysis showing the strength of 15 ♕d2: 15...e4 16 0-0-0 e3 17 fxe3 (I prefer 17 ♕b4! when play might continue 17...♖xb3+ 18 axb3 exf2 19 ♖f3 ♕xa8 20 ♜hf1 with the better chances) 17...♖xb3+ 18 axb3 fxe3 19 ♕e1 e2+ 20 ♜d2 ♕xa8 (20...♜e8! looks to me to be a brighter plan, aiming to hang on to the e-pawn) 21 ♖xc2 with the advantage.

15 ♕d2 ♖6f5?!

Black is rated about 2500 so one must respect his decision to bring the knight into the action – but it is nevertheless flawed. The main line seems to be 15...♕g7, played on the internet or in correspondence games where there is plenty of time to ponder the wild complications after 16 0-0-0 ♕f6 17 ♜e1 after which play might continue:

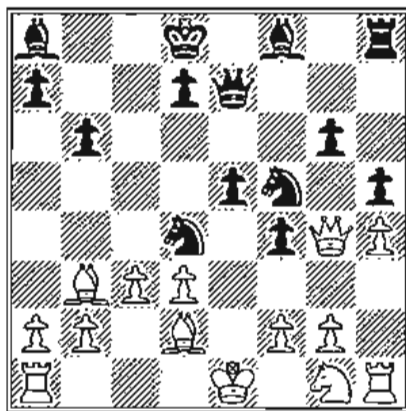


a) 17...♖g7 18 ♖b1 (a waiting move but correspondence player Tait suggests 18 h5 g5 19 h6!?) 18...h5 19 ♖h3 ♖6f5 20 ♖e2 ♖xe2 21 ♜xe2 ♖xh4 22 g3! (White is seeking even more complications otherwise he would have played the quieter 22

f3) 22...♗f3 23 ♔c3 ♗g5 24 ♖h2 ♔xh1? 25 gxf4! ♔f3 26 fxe5 ♖f8 27 exf6 ♖c5 28 ♚e5 ♖c7 29 ♖f4 1-0 Okkes-Timmerman, Dutch Team Championship, 1993.

b) 17...♗f5 18 h5 g5 (18...♗h4 19 ♚xh4 ♗xb3+ 20 axb3 ♔xh4 21 ♔xf4 ♔f6 22 d4 gxh5 23 ♖xh5 e4 24 ♗f3 ♚g8 25 g3 gave White the superior chances, Simmelink-Hanison, e-mail 2002) 19 ♗e2 ♗h6 20 ♖h3 g4 21 ♖h2 g3 22 ♖g1! or (22 fxg3 ♗g4 23 ♖g1? f3! and White is worse) 22...♗g4 23 f3 ♗xb3+ 24 axb3 ♗f2 25 ♗xf4 ♖c5 26 ♔e3 (maybe White should try 26 d4 to gain some room for his pieces after 26...♖xd4 27 ♗e2 ♖c5 28 ♗xg3 ♗xh1 29 ♖xh1 or 26...exd4 27 h6 ♗xh1 28 ♖xh1 offering equal chances) 26...♖c7 (26...♖c6 27 ♗e2 ♗xd3+ 28 ♗b1 ♗xe1 29 ♖xe1 ♚g8 30 ♗xg3 is roughly equal, Larsson-Peddie, e-mail 2001) 27 ♗e2 ♗xd3+ 28 ♗b1 ♗xe1 29 ♖xe1 ♚g8 30 ♚h3 d6 31 ♚xg3 ♚xg3 32 ♗xg3 ♔h4 33 ♖b4 ♔xg3 34 ♖g4 gave White a winning position in Larsson-Tait, corr 1998.

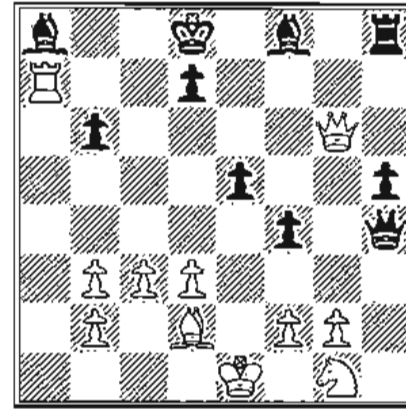
16 c3 h5



I don't really trust this position for Black and cannot recommend

anything to provide adequate counterplay.

17 ♖xg6 ♗xb3 18 axb3 ♗xh4 19 ♚xh4! ♖xh4 20 ♚xa7



White is a pawn up but more importantly he has a raging attack against an isolated black king.

20...♔c6 21 ♗f3 ♖e7

Black is forced on the defensive but it is too late.

22 ♗g5 ♗c8 23 ♗f7 ♗b8 24 ♖xc6! 1-0

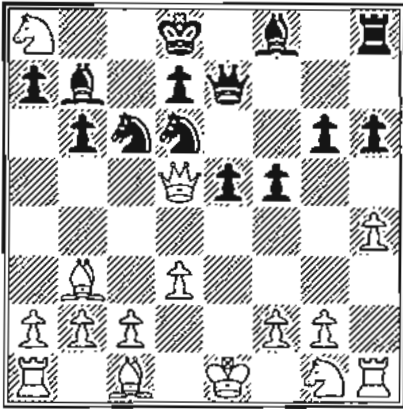
In the next game Black plays the complicated main line and tries to halt White's attack with 12...h6.

Shabalov-Parker

London 1994

1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 ♗f6 3 ♗c3 ♗xe4 4 ♖h5 ♗d6 5 ♔b3 ♗c6 6 ♗b5 g6 7 ♖f3 f5 8 ♖d5 ♖e7 9 ♗xc7+ ♗d8 10 ♗xa8 b6 11 d3 ♔b7 12 h4 h6

Though it looks simple, this does effectively cut out the option of ♔g5. In some cases Black may wish to advance the d or e pawn, which means the text introduces more options.



13 dxb6

Shabalov takes the opportunity to add a pawn to his collection. There has been some debate whether White should in fact save time with the immediate 13 ♖f3 which has had mixed results. After 13...d4 play might proceed:

a) 14 ♖h3 e4 15 ♕e3 ♕g7 16 0-0-0 ♘b6 17 dxe4 ♘b3+ 18 axb3 (18 cxb3 is necessary although the white king is temporarily exposed) 18...♕xb2+! 19 ♔d2 ♖b4+ 20 ♔e2 and now instead of 20...♕a6, as played in Posch-Brandner Hartberg 2004, Black can improve with 20...♘c3+ when Black is on top.

b) 14 ♖g3 e4 15 dxe4 ♕xe4 16 ♕e3 ♕xa8 17 0-0-0 (once White has time to castle then he can get on with the job of trying to create mating threats) 17...♘b3+ 18 axb3 ♔c8 19 ♘f3 (19 ♕xb6 axb6 20 ♖c3+ also looks good) 19...♘e4 20 ♖e5 ♗g8 21 ♖b5 d5 22 ♗xd5 ♘d6 23 ♗xd6 1-0 Becker-Feher, Szekszard 1989.

13...axb6 14 ♖f3 ♕g7

In the game Laesson-Starr, Erevan Olympiad 1996, Black played 14...d4. Then White found

the safest square for the queen, 15 ♖h3, and the obvious attack 15...e4 was thwarted after 16 ♕e3! exd3 17 0-0-0 ♘b3+ 18 cxb3 ♕a6 19 ♕xb6+ ♔c8 20 ♗xd3 and White had secured the safety of the king while keeping a material advantage.

15 ♖h3 e4 16 ♕e2

It is important that the e-file is blocked to stop the black queen penetrating the king's defence. This will mean protracted and tough resistance but it will be worth it if White can hang on to his extra material.

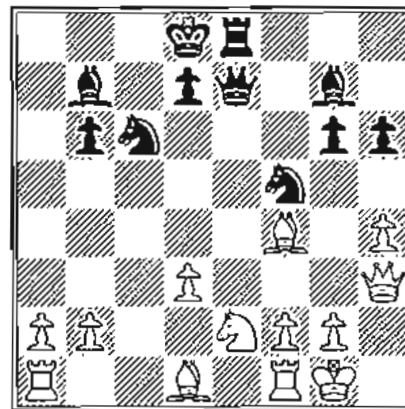
16...exd3 17 cxd3 ♗e8 18 ♕d1

Looks basic but White needs to deal with the pressure on the e-file.

18...f4

If 18...d4 White soon wriggles out of the pin on the e-file after 19 ♕e3 ♘xe2 20 ♕xe2 f4 21 ♕xb6+ ♔c8 22 ♗c1+ ♔b8 23 ♗c2 and Black can resign.

19 ♕xf4 ♘f5 20 0-0



White gets the king out of the way so he can go on the offensive.

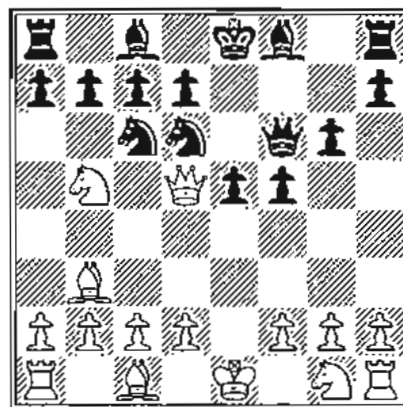
20...d4 21 ♘c3 ♘d4 22 ♘e4 ♕xe4 23 dxe4 g5 24 ♕g3 ♖xe4 25 ♗c1

The open position suits White who can now chase the black king.

25...♖e6 26 ♔g4 ♘hf5 27 ♔c7+ ♚e7 28 ♔xb6 h5 29 ♔xh5

It is time Black started to count the pieces.

29...♚f4 30 ♚a3+ ♘d6 31 ♖ce1 ♔e5 32 g3 ♚d2 33 ♚a8 1-0



The key question with these dangerous lines is what to do when Black goes wrong? In the following game Black goes astray by 8...♚f6 and is quickly punished.

Sikora Lerch – Biolek
Moravia 1997

1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 ♘xe4 4 ♚h5 ♘d6 5 ♔b3 ♘c6 6 ♘b5 g6

The rook sacrifice 6...♚e7? is premature and good for White after 7 ♘xc7+ ♚d8 8 ♘xa8 b6 9 ♘xb6 axb6 10 d3 ♔b7 11 ♔e3.

7 ♚f3 f5

It is easy for Black to go wrong. 7...♘f5 has been experimented with but upon 8 ♚d5 White emerges with the better game after 8...♘h6 9 d3 d6 10 ♔xh6 ♔e6 11 ♚f3 ♔xh6 12 ♔xe6 fxe6 13 ♚h3 when the pawn on e6 and the bishop on h6 are under attack.

8 ♚d5 ♚f6?!

The queen defends f7 and offers White a rook. This looks too good to be true from the White point of view, which turns out to be the case. The knight on a8 is trapped so it is only really an exchange sacrifice and Black will rely on his lead in

development to chase the white queen. The implications of 8...♚f6 are discussed in the rest of the chapter but I believe it is inferior because in some crucial lines the queen is slightly misplaced and this costs time.

9 ♘xc7+ ♚d8 10 ♘xa8 b6

Black wastes no time in preparing to take the knight. A much quoted game is Orev-Belchev, Bulgaria 1971, which saw a novel approach to dealing with the long-term threat of ♔c1-g5 by countering it with 10...♔h6. After 11 d3 ♔xc1 12 ♖xc1 ♖e8 13 ♔a4 e4 Black had managed to conjure up promising play for his material. However some commentators who encourage players to adopt the same strategy seem to have missed Larsen's recommendation of 13 ♘e2! when 13...g5 14 ♔a4 is winning for White. Another interesting approach was seen in Capel-Cutter, Guernsey 1989, where Black tried 10...b5 to avoid losing a pawn on b6. The game continued: 11 d4 ♘xd4 12 ♚c5! (the crucial difference in this line is that a7 can easily be attacked) 12...♔b7 13 ♚xa7 ♔xg2 14 h4 h6 15 ♖h2 ♘f3+ 16 ♘xf3 ♔xf3 17 ♖h3 ♔c6 18 ♔e3 ♔g7 19 0-0-0 1-0.

11 ♖xb6

There is an argument that although White picks up a pawn it does waste a valuable move for the defence. In this case Black's weak eighth move allows White the time to gain material.

11...axb6 12 d4!

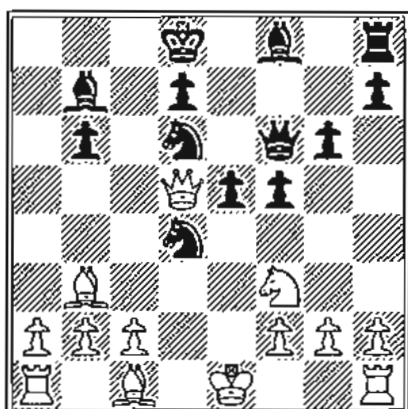
This is the reason why 8...♖f6 should be welcomed by White. A pawn is given up to quickly release the bishop which in turn enables a clever tactical sequence to transform a complicated middlegame into a pleasant endgame.

12...♘xd4

Biolek rejects the alternatives because they also lead to a clear advantage for White after 12...exd4 13 ♘f3 h6 14 0-0 or 12...e4 13 ♙f4 ♖xd4 14 ♖d1 ♖xd5 15 ♙xd5.

13 ♘f3 ♙b7

A typical reaction in this line because the control of the h1-a8 diagonal is essential to Black's strategy. If 13...♘xf3 then 14 ♖xf3 ♙b7 15 ♙d5 (15 ♖e3 ♙c7 16 a4 is also good) 15...e4 16 ♖b3 is much better for White as Black has little counterplay.

14 ♖xd4!

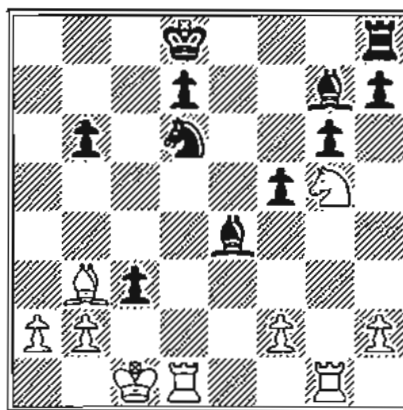
A stunning blow which hands the advantage to White. The queen is given up to force a superior ending. It is worth noting that with a queen on e7, this whole line would be useless, as Black would be able to take back and uncover a check on the e-file.

14...exd4 15 ♙g5 ♖xg5 16 ♘xg5 ♙xg2 17 ♖g1 ♙e4 18 0-0-0

It is time to count the pieces and we now realise that White has maintained a material advantage and should be able to convert it into victory.

18...♙g7 19 c3?

A miscalculation by White so I would recommend 19 f4 maintaining the advantage.

19...dxc3**20 bxc3**

This pawn capture admits that the previous move was a blunder. The knight cannot be taken because 20 ♖xd6 fails to 20...cxb2+ 21 ♙d2 b1=♖ 22 ♖xb1 ♙xb1 when it is Black who has the winning chances.

The game concluded:

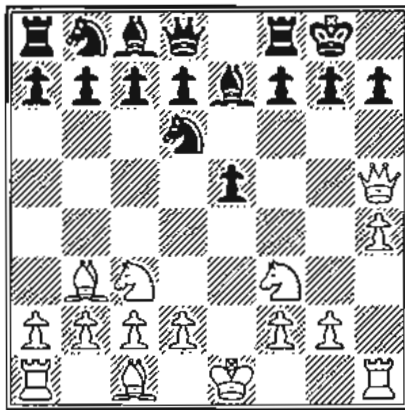
20...♙c7 21 f3 ♙c6 22 ♙c2 ♙f6 23 ♖xd6 ♙xd6 24 ♘f7+ ♙c5 25

♟xh8 ♙xh8 26 ♙g8 ♙xf3 27
 ♙xh7 ♙e4+ 28 ♟d2 ♟c4 29 ♜xg6
 ♙xc3+ 30 ♟e3 ♙b1 31 ♙g8+ ♟c5
 32 ♜g2 d5 33 h4 ♙e5 34 ♜g5 d4+
 35 ♟f2 ♙f6 36 ♜h5 ♟d6 37 ♜h6
 ♟e5 38 ♙c4 ♙e4 39 ♟e2 ♙d8 40
 h5 ♙f6 41 ♙d3 ♙d5 42 ♜h7 f4 43
 ♜a7 f3+ 44 ♟f1 ♙g5 45 ♜a6 ♙e3
 1/2-1/2

Black can avoid the potential nightmare of meeting Frankenstein by preferring 5...♙e7.

Liiva – Skrebnevskis
 European Junior Championship
 1993

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♟f6 3 ♟c3 ♟xe4 4
 ♜h5 ♟d6 5 ♙b3 ♙e7 6 ♟f3 0-0 7
 h4

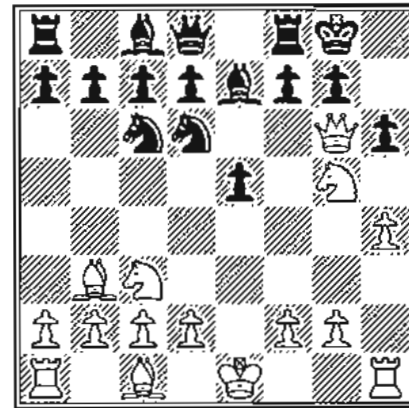


7...♟c6

In Kononova-Solovieva, corr 1976, Black dispensed with the text in favour of 7...g6?! but it just gives away a pawn. That game went 8 ♜xe5 ♟f5 9 ♟d5 ♜e8 10 ♟f1 c6 11 h5! d6 (11...cxd5? 12 hxg6 ♟g7 13 gxf7+ ♟xf7 14 ♜xd5+ leads to mate) 12 ♟xe7+ ♜xe7 13 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 14 hxg6 hxg6 15 d3 ♙e6 16

♙xe6 ♜xe6 17 g4 ♟g7 18 ♟g5 ♜e7
 19 ♟e4 (the big threat is 20 ♟f6+ ♟f8 21 ♜h8 mate) 19...♟e8 20 b3
 ♟d7 21 ♙b2 f6 22 g5 ♜e6 23 ♜h6!
 ♟g7 24 ♟g2 1-0.

8 ♟g5 h6 9 ♜g6!



A brilliant attacking idea. The queen enters the heart of Black's position to threaten mate in one, forcing a sequence of favourable exchanges.

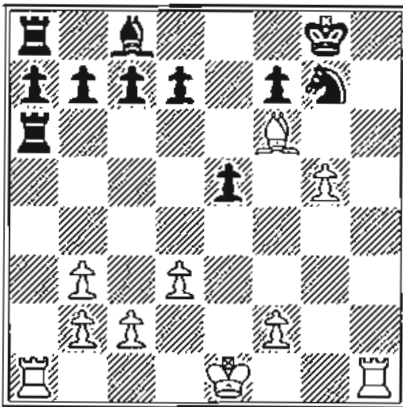
9...♙xg5

Or 9...hxg5 10 hxg5 ♜e8 11 ♜h7+ ♟f8 12 ♜h8 mate.

10 hxg5 ♜xg5 11 ♜xg5 hxg5 12
 ♟d5

The most celebrated game in this line is Gufeld-Tarve, Tallinn 1969, which really impressed me when I first played it through. Indeed, I even saw Gufeld himself demonstrate the game to an adoring crowd at Hastings and the great showman repeated it in many of his books including the acclaimed *Chess: The Search for Mona Lisa*. The only thing he forgot to mention was that the spectacular sacrifice was wrong! I found that out when I wrote a book on the Vienna and faithfully

repeated Gufeld's assessment of the game. It is probably best explained by the following infamous moves: 12 d3 ♟f5 (or 12...g4 13 ♙g5 ♟f5 14 ♟d5 d6 15 ♟xc7 ♖b8 16 ♚d2 ♟cd4 17 ♙d5 ♙e6 18 c3 ♙xd5 19 ♟xd5 g6?? [Black allows mate] 20 ♟f6+ 1-0 Lannaioli-Freire, e-mail 2001) 13 ♙xg5 ♟cd4 14 ♟d5 ♟xb3 (if 14...a5 an analysis by Tseitlin and Glazkov runs 15 g4 ♟xb3 16 axb3 f6 17 gxf5 fxg5 18 ♟xc7 with the better position) 15 ♟f6+? (15 axb3 f6 16 ♟xc7 ♖b8 17 ♙d2 a6 18 ♙b4 d6 19 g4 ♟d4 favours Black) 15...gxf6 16 ♙xf6 ♟g7 17 axb3 ♖e8 18 g4 (18 ♖a4 is well met by 18...e4! cutting off the queen's rook from the h-file) 18...♖e6 19 g5 b6? (the losing move because it is too slow – the top alternative is 19...♖a6!



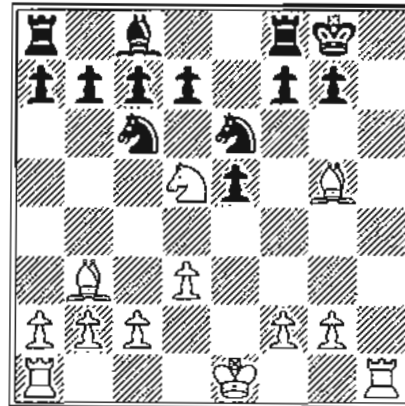
...which is much better for Black and has been pointed out both in a monograph by Konstantinopolsky and Lepeshkin and also by Keres) 20 ♚e2 e4 21 d4 e3 22 f3 d5 23 ♖h4 ♙a6+ 24 c4 dxc4 25 ♖ah1 1-0

12...♟f5 13 d3 ♟fd4?!

The established knight move is 13...♟cd4, which at a glance seems odd because of 14 g4 when the

knight on f5 cannot move due to the threat of White mating with ♟e7+. But 14...c6! is the key resource when 15 ♟c7 ♟xb3 16 axb3 ♟d4 17 ♚d1 d6 is an old analysis by Harding who rightly points out that Black will emerge with the better position because 18 ♟xa8 ♙xg4+ 19 ♚d2 ♖xa8 g gives Black a material advantage. Therefore White should try 14 ♟xc7 when 14...♖b8 15 c3 ♟xb3 16 axb3 b6! 17 ♙xg5 offers equal chances.

14 ♙xg5 ♟e6



15 ♟f6+!

White borrows the mating idea from Gufeld-Tarve, Tallinn 1969, mentioned in the note to White's 12th move.

15...gxf6 16 ♙xf6 ♟g7 17 ♚d2

The king steps out of the way to allow the queen's rook to join in the attack.

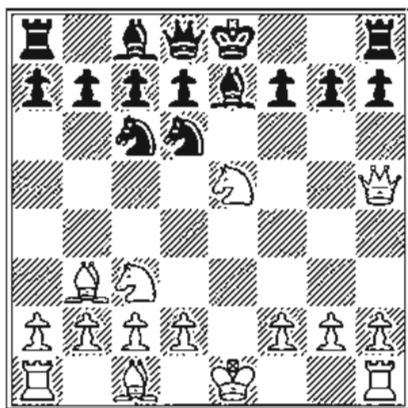
17...♖e8 18 ♖h6 ♟c7 19 ♖h8+ 1-0

Black resigned as on 19...♚xh8 comes 20 ♙xf7 and 21 ♖h1 mate.

Black can also add a twist with 6...♟c6 in an effort to delay castling so that White cannot embark on the usual energetic attack.

Rogers – Raetsky
Baden 1998

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗f6 3 ♗c3 ♗xe4 4
♚h5 ♗d6 5 ♖b3 ♖e7 6 ♗f3 ♗c6 7
♗xe5



White takes the opportunity to restore material equality. It has been known for some time that 7 d3 favours Black. For example 7...g6 8 ♚h3 ♗f5 9 g4 ♗fd4 10 ♖h6 ♖f8 11 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 12 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 13 0-0-0 (13 ♚xh7 sees White grabbing a poisoned pawn as after 13...♚g5 I think Black is better) 13...d6 14 f4 h5 and the pinned g-pawn will soon fall to Black, Jaffe-Alekhine, Karlsbad 1911.

7...g6

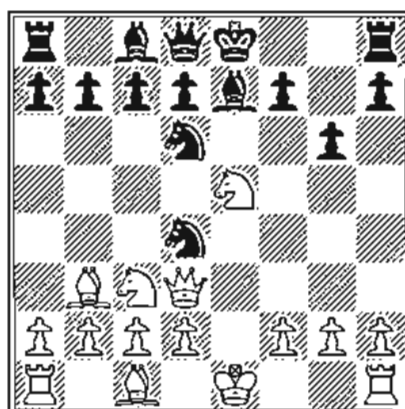
The obvious exchange of pieces with 7...♗xe5 8 ♚xe5 is fine for White because it is difficult for Black to make progress by harassing the white queen. For instance: 8...0-0 (Black can hope to try to pin the queen on the e-file only if White is very careless) 9 d3 c6 10 h4!? ♗e8 11 ♖g5 (of course Black's f-pawn is pinned to the king so White need not worry about

...f7-f6 when seeking to trade pieces) 11...♖f6 (if 11...♖xg5?! then 12 hxg5 allows the rook on the h-file to bolster the attack) 12 ♚g3 d5 13 0-0-0 with the aim of pursuing a kingside attack, Sulskis-Welling, Bad Wiessee 2003. In Wibe-Heggheim, corr 1990, Black opted for 7...0-0 leading to a White initiative. There followed 8 0-0 ♗d4 9 ♗d5 ♗xb3 10 axb3 ♗e8 11 ♚e2! ♖f6 12 d3 (it is worth investigating 12 ♗g4!? to deprive Black of the bishops after 12...d6 13 ♗xf6+ ♚xf6 14 ♗e7+ ♚h8 15 ♗xc8 ♚xc8 16 d3 and White has a slight advantage) 12...c6 13 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 14 ♖f4 d5 15 ♚f3 h6 16 ♗fe1 with equal play.

8 ♚e2

The queen retreats despite the fact that Black can continue to harass it. In the game Liiva-Ivanchuk, Tallinn rapidplay 1996, White decided to double Black's c-pawns with 8 ♗xc6 before shielding the queen from unwanted advances: 8...dxc6 9 ♚d1 ♗f5 10 0-0 ♗d4 11 d3 0-0 12 ♖f4 a5 13 ♖e5 ♖f5 14 ♗e1 ♖f6 and the chances are roughly equal.

8...♗d4 9 ♚d3!



This is the right way to strive for an advantage. White volunteers to temporarily entomb his dark-squared bishop. The middlegame plan, based on the expectation that Black will take the light-squared bishop, is to make the most of the semi-open a-file.

The game Buchniecek-Berezjuk, Pardubice 1999, illustrates what may happen if White refrains from playing the innovative text move. After 9 ♖d1 0-0 10 0-0 ♙f6 11 ♘f3 ♘6f5 12 d3 ♘xf3+ 13 ♖xf3 ♘d4 14 ♖d1 ♘xb3 15 axb3 d5 16 ♖f3 c6 17 ♙h6 ♞e8 Black's chances are preferable thanks to the pair of bishops and solid set-up.

9...♘xb3 10 axb3 ♘f5 11 0-0 d6 12 ♘f3 c6 13 b4

It makes sense to advance the pawns on the queenside so as to have the option of trading off the doubled b-pawns and making way for b2-b3 to free the bishop.

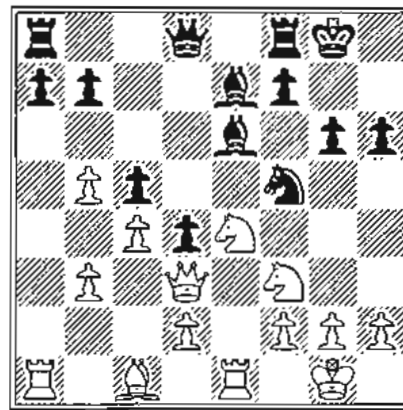
13...0-0 14 b5 d5 15 b3

An improvement on Anand-Ivanchuk, Roquebrune rapidplay 1992, which saw Black try 15 bxc6 when the exchange of pawns was revealed as premature because White needs to keep the position closed to give him time to catch up on his development. That game continued 15...bxc6 16 ♞e1 a5 (the threat of ...♙a6 is awkward for White) 17 ♖e2 ♙b4 18 d3!? (White tries to create complications by sacrificing the exchange but 18 b3 is the safe option) 18...d4 19 ♘e4 ♙xe1 20 ♖xe1 f6 when Black is the exchange up and favourite to win.

15...d4

If 15...cxb5 then White has a small plus after 16 ♖xb5 ♖c7 17 ♖d3 ♞d8 18 ♙b2. Also worth trying is 16 ♙b2 intending ♘xd4 opening up the a1-h8 diagonal for the bishop on b2.

16 ♘e4 c5 17 ♞e1 ♙e6 18 c4 h6



19 ♖b1!

A delightful idea to cement the queenside pawn structure by preparing to play d2-d3. Rogers is not content to allow the game to drift to a draw and manages to keep his options open.

19...♖b6 20 d3 a6 21 bxa6 ♞xa6 22 ♞xa6 ♖xa6 23 h3 g5?!

An ambitious plan to attack on the kingside that just ends up with Black weakening his own position. The centralised knight on e4 is well placed to help White both to defend and be on standby for an attack.

24 b4 cxb4 25 g4! ♘g7 26 ♘xd4

White is now better thanks to the dominating presence of the white knights.

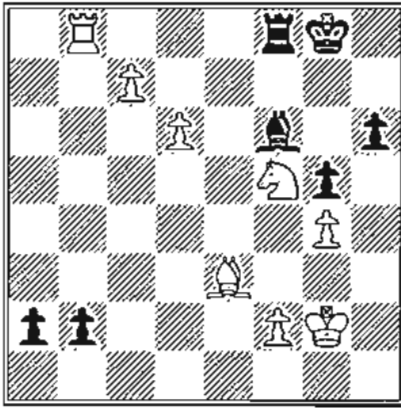
26...f5 27 ♘g3 fxg4 28 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 29 d4 ♙f6 30 ♖g6+ ♘g7 31 ♙e3 ♙d8

The exchange of queens is in White's favour because his passed pawns are more menacing. 31...gxf3 is the best try for Black.

32 ♖xa6 bxa6 33 hxg4 a5 34 ♜b1 ♙e7 35 c5 ♟e6?! 36 ♟f5!

The position favours White now that he is able to establish a knight on the influential f5 square.

36...♙f6 37 d5 ♟f4 38 d6 ♟e2+ 39 ♙g2 ♟c3 40 ♜b3 ♟d5 41 c6 a4 42 ♜d3 b3 43 ♜xd5 b2 44 ♜b5 a3 45 c7 a2 46 ♜b8



46...b1=♚

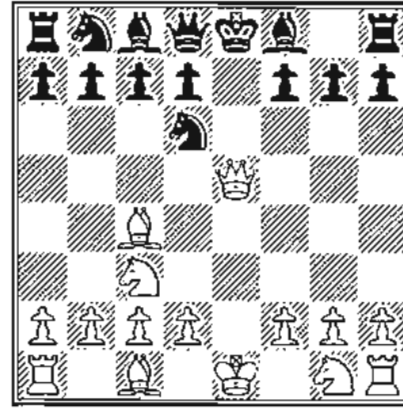
Black has an extra queen on the board but the weakness of his king makes all the difference.

47 ♜xf8+ ♙xf8 48 c8=♚+ ♙f7 49 ♖c4+ ♙f8 50 d7 ♖xf5 51 gxf5 a1=♚ 52 ♙c5+ ♙g7 53 d8=♚ 1-0

If you think this wild attacking chess is not for you then there is a safer alternative available:

Rogers – Shirov
Spanish League 1998

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♟f6 3 ♟c3 ♟xe4 4 ♖h5 ♟d6 5 ♖xe5+



This peaceful system is not particularly popular and Black should have no worries.

5...♙e7

Not 5...♙e7? when 6 ♖xg7 ♙f6 7 ♖g4 leaves White a pawn up for nothing.

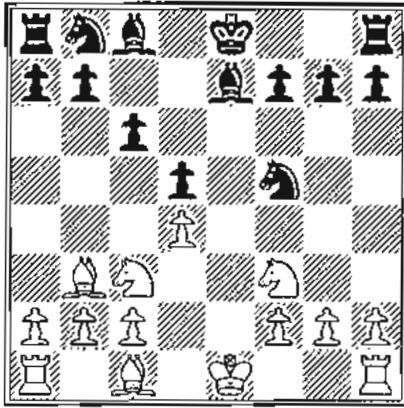
6 ♖xe7+ ♙xe7 7 ♙b3

An alternative is 7 ♙e2, although this would hardly increase White's activity. For example: 7...♟f5 8 ♟f3 c6 9 d4 d5 10 ♙f4 ♙d6 11 ♙xd6 ♟xd6 12 0-0-0 ♙g4 13 h3 ♙xf3 14 ♙xf3 ♟d7 15 ♜he1+ ♙d8 16 ♟a4 with equal chances, Varavin-Tolstikh, Ekaterinburg 1997.

7...c6

Shirov cuts out the option of ♟d5 and prepares to play a future ...d7-d5 which would lessen the influence of the bishop on b3. In the game Bartsch-Schmidt, Passau 1997, Black tried 7...♟f5 but it failed to impress after 8 ♟f3 ♟c6 9 ♟d5 ♙d8 (the bishop is temporarily passively placed 10 c3 ♟ce7 11 ♟f4 ♟g6 12 d4 with a slight edge because Black's pieces lack harmony.

8 d4 ♟f5 9 ♟f3 d5



10 ♟e2

Instead 10 0-0 was tried in the game Depasquale-Solomon, Australian Championship 2004, when 10...♟d7!? 11 ♖e1 ♟f8 12 ♟e2 ♟d6 13 c3 f6 14 h3 h5 (Black is just trying to rattle White into making a mistake) 15 ♟g3 h4 16 ♟f1 a5 17 ♟e3 gives White a slight edge. However White must remember that care needs to be taken even in a position like this which looks fairly safe. Bachofner-Timoschenko, Vienna 2003, saw the careless 10 ♟f4?! when 10...g5! gave Black a slight initiative: 11 ♟xb8 (or 11 ♟xg5 ♟xd4 12 0-0-0 ♟xb3+ 13 axb3 h6 14 ♟f3 ♟g4 is slightly better for Black) 11...♞xb8 12 ♟e2 h5 (Black is at liberty to advance his kingside pawns in order to provoke White into compromising his kingside pawn structure) 13 c3 h4 14 h3 ♟d6 15 ♟c2 ♟f5 16 ♟xf5 ♟xf5 17 ♟e5 f6 18 ♟g6 ♞h7 19 ♟xe7 ♞xe7 when the pin on the e-file proved awkward for White.

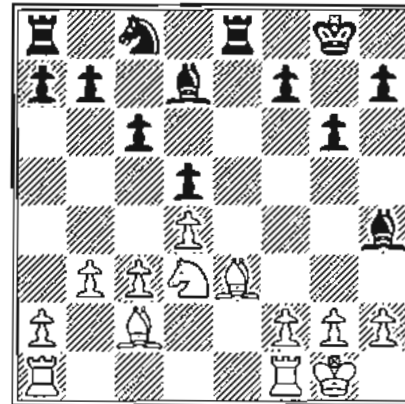
10...0-0 11 0-0 ♟h4

Shirov offers to exchange his king's knight. This is a standard idea in the line to ease Black's passive position.

12 ♟xh4 ♟xh4 13 ♟g3 ♟e6 14 c3

White safeguards the d-pawn while giving his bishop access to the c2 square. Basically, both players are waiting for a mistake because each of them has a very solid position.

14...♟d7 15 ♟c2 g6 16 ♟e2 ♟b6 17 ♟f4 ♟d7 18 b3 ♞fe8 19 ♟e3 ♟c8 20 ♟d3



20...♟d6

Rogers was up against another strong grandmaster in a game versus Yusupov, German Team Championship, 1999 but Black failed to make much of an impression after 20...♟f5 21 ♞ac1 ♟d6 22 ♞fe1 ♞e7 23 ♟e5 ♞ae8 24 g4!? (White wishes to exchange bishops so that his queen's rook can get back into the action) 24...♟xc2 25 ♞xc2 ♞e6 26 ♞d1 ♟f6 27 c4 dxc4 28 bxc4 ♞d8 29 f4 ½-½.

21 ♟e5 ♟f5

Black has manoeuvred his pieces around the board without making much of an impact. The draw is still in sight.

22 ♖ac1 ♙d8 23 g4 ♙xc2 24 ♖xc2 f6 25 ♟d3 ♙b6 26 h3 ♖ad8 27 ♖e1 ♚f7 28 ♚g2 ♙a5 29 a4 ♟e4 30 f3 ♟d6 31 ♙f4 ♖xe1 ½-½

A great way to confront a strong player playing the Black pieces if you are content with a draw.

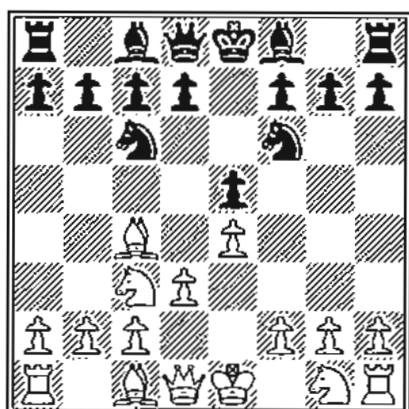
Conclusion

The reputation of 3...♟xe4 as an easy equalising move is certainly not as straightforward as it first appears. Kuipers-Janssen is the perfect example of White playing the main line to win. Shabalov-

Parker reinforces the view that Black has to be careful amidst all the complications. It is understandable that Black will want to avoid such a tactical main line but Sikora Lerch - Biolek is a demonstration of how such a strategy can go wrong. A relatively quieter line is examined in Liiva-Skrebnevskis but White still manages to conjure up an impressive attack. The defence can be toughened up and Rogers-Raetsky sees White taking a long time to break down the barriers helped by a touch of luck. Finally, Rogers-Shirov introduces 5 ♖xe5 which is regarded as a dull line where White plays safely and Black is usually obliged to agree an early draw.

Vienna Options

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 3 ♖c3 ♗c6 4 d3

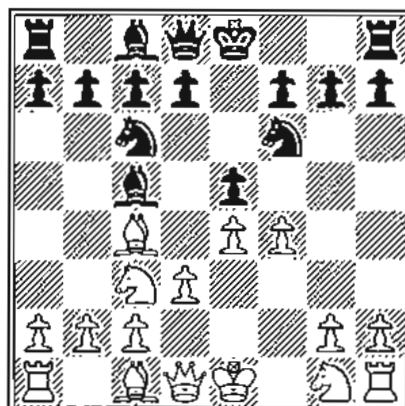


The art of transposing into different openings is a feature of the Bishop's Opening. In this case once again a preferred version of the Vienna is the result and in some cases the King's Gambit Declined. The beauty of playing the Bishop's Opening is that you avoid the majority of awkward Black defences and just have to know the attacking lines for White. This section will especially appeal to those who prefer the move-order 1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 and now 3 d3 to avoid the 3 ♖c3 ♗xe4 complications. The introduction of 3 d3 simply means White will transpose to the lines discussed in this chapter after 3... ♗c6 4 ♖c3.

White wins

Lane – Jackson
British Championship 1989

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗f6 3 ♖c3 ♗c6 4 d3 ♘c5 5 f4



The most aggressive way to test Black's handling of the opening.

5...d6

Black supports the e5 pawn and opens a line for his light-squared bishop

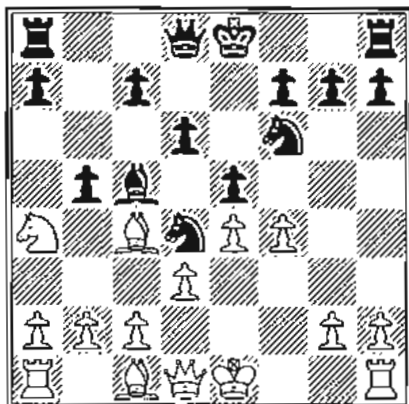
6 ♗f3 ♗g4 7 ♗a4!

White aims to exchange Black's dark-squared bishop, which for the present prevents kingside castling.

7...♗xf3

In tournament practice I think this is the move that seems to be the most common reply.

8 ♖xf3 ♘d4 9 ♖d1 b5



10 ♙xf7+!

This was a big shock to Black who was expecting 10 ♘xc5. The idea is to draw the black king out into the open and exert terrific attacking pressure.

10...♔xf7 11 ♘xc5 exf4?

I sensed that Jackson was unfamiliar with the position and she consequently fails to put up stubborn resistance. The best chance is 11...dxc5 when Balashov-Matanovic, Skopje 1970, continued 12 fxe5 ♘d7 13 c3 ♘e6 14 0-0+ ♔e8 (15...♔g8 is also met by 15 d4) 15 d4! cxd4 16 cxd4 ♖e7?! (16...♘e5!? is supposed to be a big improvement but after 17 dxe5 ♖xd1 18 ♖xd1 ♔e7 19 ♙e3 ♖ad8 20 ♖d5 White is still better) 17 ♙e3 ♖f8 18 d5 ♖xf1+ 19 ♖xf1 ♘d8 20 e6 ♘f6 (20...♘e6 does not stop the rot upon 21 dxe6 ♖xe6 22 ♖xb5 ♖xe4 23 ♖e1! and White wins) 21 ♖c1! (21 ♖b5+ c6 22 ♖d3 ♖b4! is not so clear) 21...♘e4 22 ♖xb5+ c6 23 ♖xc6 ♔f8 24 ♖c1 ♔g8 25 ♖c7! ♖d6 26 ♖e8+ ♖f8 27 ♖xg7+! 1-0.

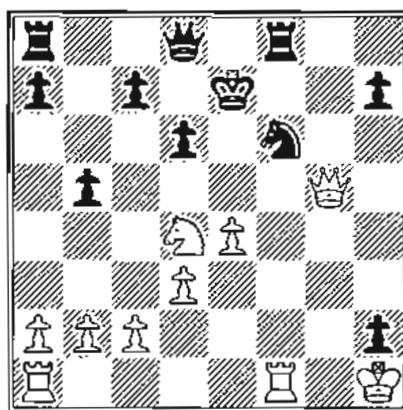
12 ♘b3 ♘e6 13 0-0 g5?!

In such difficult circumstances Black should try to play it safe with 13...♖f8, intending ...♔g8.

14 g3! fxg3 15 ♙xg5!

A fairly easy decision to make as it strips away the pawn barrier from the black king.

15...gxf2+ 16 ♔h1 ♘xg5 17 ♖h5+ ♔e7 18 ♖xg5 ♖f8 19 ♘d4



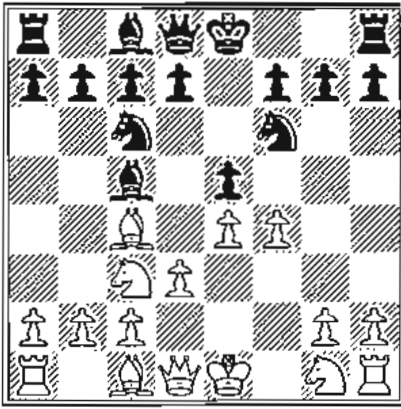
Black has a hopeless position which should be proof enough that this line is worth exploring. The knight enters the fray leaving Black unable to cope with the multiple threats.

19...♖e8 20 e5! dxe5 21 ♖xe5+ ♔d7 22 ♖f5+ ♔d6 23 ♖ae1 1-0

Black can put up sterner resistance with 6...♘a5 in order to exchange the bishop on c4, which is usually an aggressive piece in this line.

Mitkov – Rocha
Porto 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 d3 ♙c5 5 f4



5...d6

Also possible:

a) 5...♙xg1 (Black gives up his bishop pair to stop White from castling kingside) 6 ♖xg1 d6 7 f5 ♘a5 8 ♙b3 ♘xb3 9 axb3 d5 10 ♙g5 c6 11 ♗f3, intending to castle queenside, gives White the better prospects.

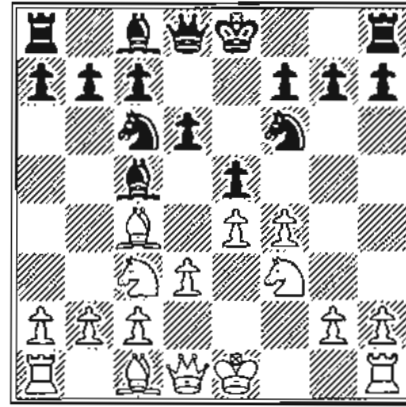
b) 5...exf4 6 ♙xf4 d6 7 ♘f3 ♙g4 8 ♗d2 ♗e7 9 0-0-0 0-0-0 10 ♙g5 ♙e6 11 ♘d5 ♙xd5 12 ♙xd5 h6 13 ♙xc6 hxg5 14 ♙a4 g4 15 ♘g5 ♘d5 16 ♖de1 ♘e3 17 ♖xe3 ♙xe3?! (17...♗xg5 18 d4 ♙b6 19 c3 gives White an edge) 18 ♗xe3 ♙b8 19 e5 and White had a material advantage in Basman-Bigg, Sutton 1999.

c) 5...d5?! (a gambit that has lost its shock value) 6 exd5 ♘g4? 7 dxc6 ♗h4+ 8 g3 ♙f2+ 9 ♖f1 ♙xg3 10 ♗f3 ♘xh2+ 11 ♖xh2 ♗xh2 12 ♘ce2 ♙h3+ 13 ♘xh3 ♗xh3+ 14 ♗g2 when White had a clear advantage in Silva - De la Vega, Lima 1999.

6 ♘f3

The game has now transposed to the King's Gambit Declined. This position can also arise from the

move-order 1 e4 e5 2 f4 ♙c5 3 ♘f3 d6 4 ♘c3 ♘c6 5 ♙c4 ♘f6 6 d3.



6...♘a5

Rocha wants to exchange the light-squared bishop which is usually an important component of White's attack.

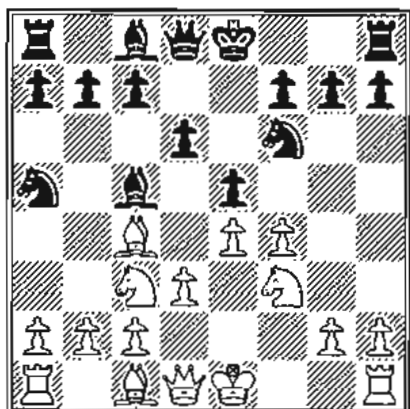
A few other moves have been played here:

a) 6...♘g4 7 ♘g5! 0-0 (7...h6 is well met by 8 f5!) 8 f5 ♙f2+ 9 ♖f1 ♘e3+ 10 ♙xe3 ♙xe3 11 h4 ♙xg5 (after 11...g6 Keres recommended 12 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 13 ♗f3 with advantage to White) 12 hxg5 ♗xg5 13 ♖h5 gave White good attacking chances in Schmied-Olafsson, Copenhagen 1998.

b) 6...exf4 7 ♙xf4 ♙e6 8 ♙b5! d5 9 e5 ♘d7 10 d4 ♙e7 11 a3 0-0 12 0-0 f6 13 exf6 ♙xf6 14 ♗d2 a6 15 ♙xc6 bxc6 16 ♖ael and White intends to play ♘e5 with the better position as in Shabalov-Payen, Philadelphia 1999.

c) 6...h6 7 ♘a4 ♙b6 8 ♘xb6 axb6 9 ♙b5 (Alekhine tried 9 0-0!? with success) 9...♗e7 10 0-0 ♙d7 11 ♖h1 0-0-0 12 ♗e1 exf4 13 ♙xf4 g5 14 ♙d2 ♘g4 15 ♙xc6 bxc6 16 h3

with equal chances, Liiva-Gausel, Bern 1994.



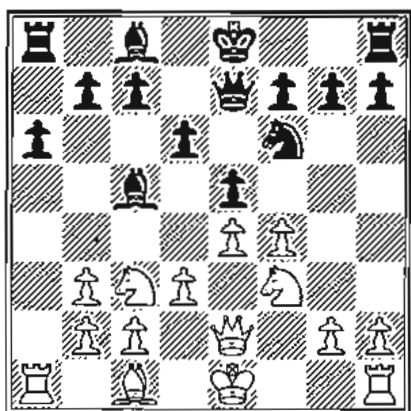
7 ♖b3 ♜xb3

If 7...a6, to provide room for the dark-squared bishop to retreat, then White could reply with 8 ♖e2 transposing to the main game.

8 axb3 a6

Black gives the bishop an escape square on a7. If 8...0-0 then White can exchange the useful dark-squared bishop by 9 ♜a4 when 9...exf4 10 ♜xc5 dxc5 11 ♖xf4 gives White the edge, Talla-Tichy, Czech Team Championship 2001.

9 ♖e2 ♖e7



10 ♖e3

Mitkov wishes to exchange the well placed bishop and keep the option of fxe5 to open the f-file. The decision to close the position with 10 f5 is popular when Black has castled kingside because White is handed a formidable attacking plan of advancing the kingside pawns. In the game Lemmers-Klip, Enschede 1995, Black wisely castled queenside and experienced few problems: 10...♖d7 11 ♖e3 ♖xe3 12 ♖xe3 0-0-0 13 0-0 g6 with equal chances. A better choice is 10...h6! to keep the options open.

10...♖xe3 11 ♖xe3 ♖d7 12 fxe5 ♜g4

Rocha is alert to the peculiarities of the position because the obvious 12...fxe5 is well answered by 18 ♖g5! which wins a pawn.

13 ♖d2 ♜xe5 14 ♜d5 ♜xf3+ 15 gxf3 ♖d8 16 ♖c3 0-0

This seems to be asking to be attacked but Black had little choice in the matter thanks to the pressure on g7. White has a simple attacking method of doubling rooks on the g-file to keep Rocha on the defensive.

17 0-0-0 c6 18 ♖hg1 f6 19 ♜f4 ♖e7 20 ♜h5

White continues to probe the kingside pawn barrier for weaknesses and makes room for f3-f4-f5.

20...♖f7 21 f4 d5 22 ♖g2 ♜h8 23 f5?

I think Mitkov was a little careless here and should have preferred 23

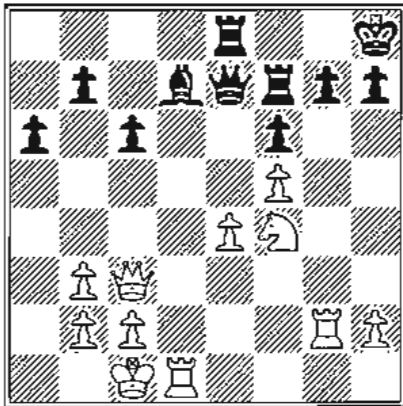
$\text{♞d}g1$ and after $23... \text{♞g}8$ $24 \text{♜f}4$ it transposes back into the game.

23...dxe4 24 dxe4 ♞g8?

Black should go for it with $24... \text{♞xe}4!$ when $25 \text{♞xg}7 \text{♞xg}7$ $25 \text{♞xf}6$ ($25 \text{♜xg}7$ is well met by $25... \text{♞xf}5$ because White cannot take on f6 due to the threat of mate on c2) $25... \text{♞e}3+$ $26 \text{♚b}1 \text{♞ag}8$ $27 \text{♞xd}7 \text{♞e}1+$ $28 \text{♚a}2 \text{♞a}5+$ $29 \text{♚b}1 \text{♞e}1+$ leaves the result a draw by perpetual check.

25 ♜f4! ♞e8

After $25... \text{♞xe}4$ then $26 \text{♜g}6+$ $\text{hxg}6$ $27 \text{♞h}3$ mate.



26 ♜g6+

A fantastic tactical strike. The knight is given up in order to open up the h-file and secure a hold on g6.

26...hxg6 27 fxg6 ♚g8

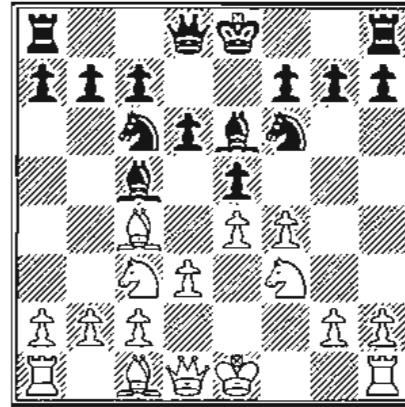
Or $27... \text{♞f}8$ $28 \text{♞h}3+$ $\text{♚g}8$ $29 \text{♞h}7$ mate.

$28 \text{♞g}3$ $\text{f}5$ $29 \text{♞h}3 \text{♞e}6$ $30 \text{♞h}7+$ $\text{♚f}8$ $31 \text{gx}f7 \text{♞x}f7$ $32 \text{♞h}8+$ $\text{♚e}7$ $33 \text{♞xg}7$ 1-0

The influence of the bishop on c4 can be annoying for Black so $6... \text{♞e}6$ has been tested.

Fedorov – Norri Pula 1997

1 e4 e5 2 ♞c4 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 ♜c6 4 d3 ♞c5 5 f4 d6 6 ♜f3 ♞e6

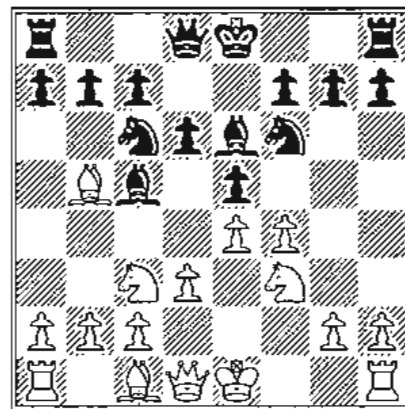


Black wishes to relieve the pressure against f7 by offering the exchange of bishops.

For those who are keen to spot transpositions, the actual move-order in the game was $1 \text{e}4 \text{e}5$ $2 \text{f}4 \text{♞c}5$ $3 \text{♜f}3 \text{d}6$ $4 \text{♜c}3 \text{♜f}6$ $5 \text{♞c}4 \text{♜c}6$ $6 \text{d}3 \text{♞e}6$.

7 ♞b5!

The knight is pinned to good effect. The text is not a waste of a move because the bishop on e6 is rather badly positioned.



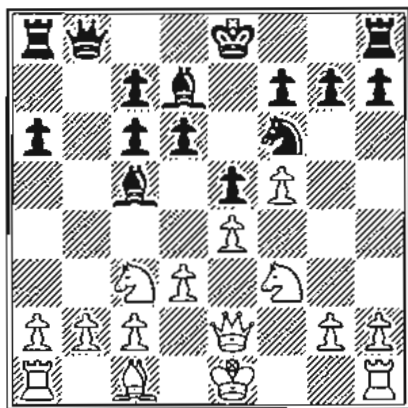
7...a6

Black can try 7...♔d7 but in the game Van Beers-Antoniou, Plovdiv 2003, White continued 8 f5 when 8...♖d4?! 9 ♔xd7+ ♖xd7 (9...♗xd7 is met by 10 ♔g5 with an edge) 10 ♖a4 c6 11 ♖xc5 dxc5 (or 11...♖xc5 12 ♖xd4 exd4 13 ♗g4 with the better prospects) 12 0-0 ♗b6? 13 ♖d2! 0-0-0? 14 a4! (the threat is c2-c3 trapping the knight on d4) 14...c4 15 ♖xc4 ♗c5 16 ♔e3 b5 17 axb5 cxb5 18 ♖a5 ♗c7 19 c3 ♖c6 20 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 21 ♖xa7 ♖c5 22 ♗a1 1-0

8 ♔xc6+ bxc6 9 f5 ♔d7 10 ♗e2

An improvement on the game Salmensuu-Norri, Helsinki 1994, where White played 10 ♔g5 to pin the knight. Black responded with 10...♗b8, rightly ignoring the threat to double the f-pawns which is not so critical without kingside castling. There followed 11 ♖a4 ♔a7 12 ♔xf6 gxf6 13 ♗d2 ♖g8 14 0-0-0 ♗b5 15 b3 a5 16 g3 ♖b8 17 ♖he1 ♗b4 18 ♗xb4 axb4 with an equal ending.

10...♗b8



A distinct echo of the previous note on White's 10th move where Norri was successful with a transfer

of the queen to the b-file and an exchange of queens. In this case, the difference is that Fedorov has more options because he has not yet moved his dark-squared bishop.

11 ♖d1!

Fedorov considers that 11 b3 ♔b4 12 ♔d2 a5 gives Black decent chances.

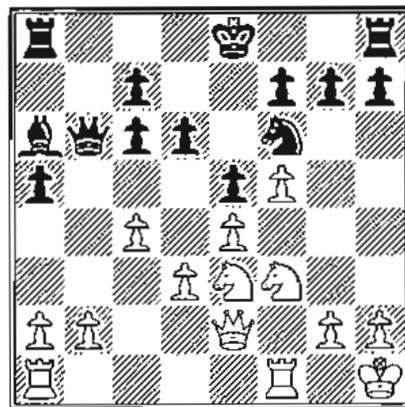
11...♗b5 12 c3 a5

Black has to know what he is doing in such a position because there is little room for manoeuvre. In this case preparation is made to activate the light-squared bishop with ...♔c8-a6.

13 ♔e3 ♔c8 14 0-0 ♔a6

Upon 14...♖xe4? White can break the pin with 15 c4 and win a piece.

15 c4 ♗b6 16 ♖h1 ♔xe3 17 ♖xe3



17...♖d7?!

Black is spending time on finding suitable squares for his pieces but it is a slow process. 17...0-0?! walks into a very strong attack after 18 g4. A better idea is 17...0-0-0 when 18 ♖ab1 (18 g4?! d5! 19 exd5 cxd5 20 g5 e4 and the exposed white king is a cause for concern) 18...♖he8 19

b4! a4 20 ♖fc1!? h6 21 b5 cxb5 22 cxb5 ♕xb5 23 ♗b2 ♗xe3 24 ♗xb5 with a good attack according to an analysis by Fedorov.

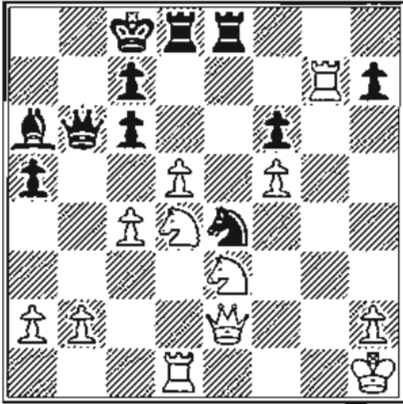
18 g4 f6 19 g5!

White continues to undermine the black kingside.

19...0-0-0 20 ♖g1 ♖c5 21 gxf6 gxf6 22 ♖g7 d5 23 exd5 ♖he8?! 24 ♖d1

Or 24 ♖xh7 e4 25 dxe4 ♖xe4 with counterplay for Black.

24...e4 25 dxe4 ♖xe4 26 ♖d4!



The knight threatens both ♖xc6 and ♖e6 which are too much to handle for the flimsy Black defence.

26...cxd5 27 ♖e6 d4 28 ♖d5 ♖xd5 29 ♗xe4 ♕xc4 30 ♖c1 ♕xa2 31 ♖xc7 1-0

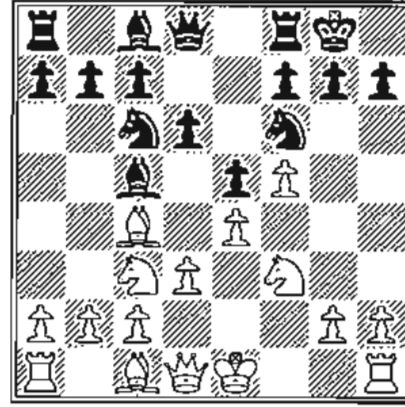
Black can also try 6...0-0 but must defend against a kingside pawn avalanche.

Hebden – Martinovsky London 1986

1 e4 e5 2 ♕c4 ♖f6 3 ♖c3 ♖c6 4 d3 ♕c5 5 f4 d6 6 ♖f3 0-0

The choice of castling is doubled-edged because it tends to invite White to attack.

7 f5!?



Now that Black has castled early White is happy to close the position in anticipation of advancing the kingside pawns in an attack.

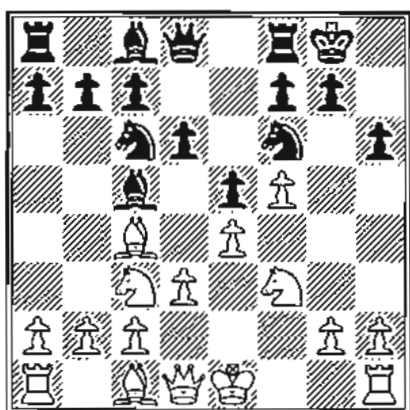
7...h6

A precaution against the pin with ♕g5. Black has other tries here:

a) 7...♖a5 8 ♕g5 c6 9 a3 ♖xc4 10 dxc4 h6 11 ♕h4 a5 12 ♗d2 a4 13 g4! (a strong attacking theme in this line when the knight is pinned) 13...♗b6 14 ♕xf6 gxf6 15 ♗xh6 ♗xb2 16 ♖d2 ♕d4 17 ♖e2 1-0 Nun-Lehner, Oberwart 1992.

b) 7...♖d4 8 ♕g5 c6 9 a3 h6 10 ♕h4 b5 11 ♕a2 a5 12 g4! g5 13 fxg6 ♕xg4 14 ♕xf7+ ♖g7 15 ♖xd4 ♕xd4 16 ♖e2 ♕xb2 17 ♖b1 ♕c3+ 18 ♖f2 ♖xe4+ 19 dxe4 ♗xh4+ 20 ♖g2 ♗h3+ 21 ♖gl ♗e3+ 0-1 Fischer-Puto, simul, Cicero 1964. This game is fairly well known and White can follow the legendary former world champion's play with confidence. Just

remember to improve with 16
 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 17 ♜xg4 ♜f2+ 18
 ♔d1 and pick up an easy point.



8 ♘d5!

It is imperative that White plays positively and here he seeks to ease his way forward by preparing g4. There is also the option of 8 ♜e2 with the idea of ♖e3 and castling kingside. This is all very well but 8...♘d4! 9 ♘xd4 exd4 10 ♘a4 ♖xf5 wins a pawn for Black due to the threat of ...♞e8 pinning the queen.

8...♘d4 9 ♘xf6+ ♜xf6 10 ♘xd4
 ♖xd4 11 c3 ♖b6 12 ♜h5 c6

Martinovsky needs to open up the centre otherwise g2-g4-g5 is fatal.

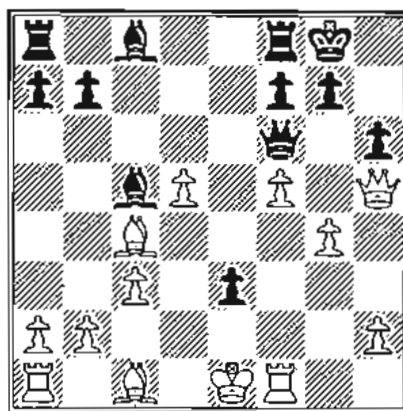
13 ♞f1

The immediate 13 g4!? is probably better.

13...d5 14 exd5 e4! 15 d4

If 15 dxe4 then 15...♞e8 16 ♜g4 h5! 17 ♜f4 ♜xf5! 18 ♞xf5 ♞xe4+ 19 ♔f1 ♞xc4 20 ♞xh5 ♞e8 intending ♞4e4 gives Black sufficient compensation for the pawn.

15...c5 16 g4 e3 17 dxc5 ♖xc5



18 ♔e2

I quite like 18 ♞f3 intending h2-h4 and g4-g5.

18...b5 19 ♖d3

Or 19 ♖xb5 when Black can try to go after the white king with 19...♖a6.

19...♞e8 20 g5 hxg5

The ending arising from 20...♜xg5 benefits only one person and it is not Black. For instance: 21 ♜xg5 hxg5 22 b4 ♖b6 23 ♖xb5 ♞e5 24 ♖d3 ♖b7 (24...♞xd5? 25 ♖e4) 25 c4 wins.

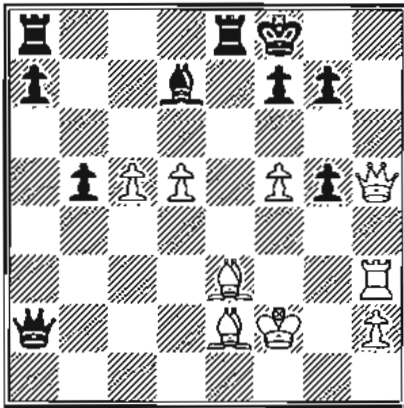
21 ♞f3 ♖d7 22 b4

It would make no sense to expose the white king with 22 ♖xe3 because it is Black who is better after 22...♖xe3 23 ♞xe3 ♖xf5 24 ♜f3 ♞xe3+ 25 ♜xe3 ♖xd3+ 26 ♔xd3 ♞d8.

22...♜xc3

Or 22...♖xb4? 23 cxb4 ♜xa1 24 f6 gxf6 25 ♜h6! f5 26 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 27 ♞xf5 f6 28 ♜g6+ ♔h8 29 ♞f3 g4 30 ♞f5 mates.

23 ♞h3 ♔f8 24 bxc5 ♜xa1 25 ♖xe3 ♜xa2+ 26 ♔f1 ♜a1+ 27 ♔f2 ♜a2+ 28 ♖e2



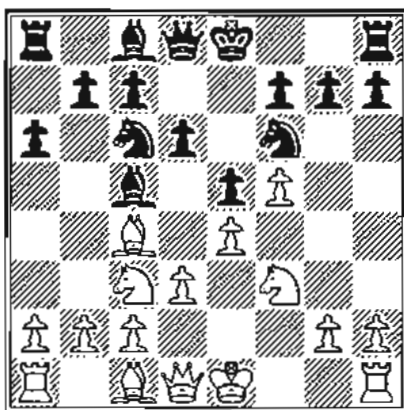
28...♖xd5 1-0

26 ♖h8+ ♔e7 30 ♕g5+ follows.

If Black is concerned about his dark-squared bishop being exchanged by ♖a5 he might decide to create an escape square with 6...a6.

Conquest – Smejkal Bundesliga 1996

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 d3 ♘c5 5 f4 d6 6 ♘f3 a6 7 f5

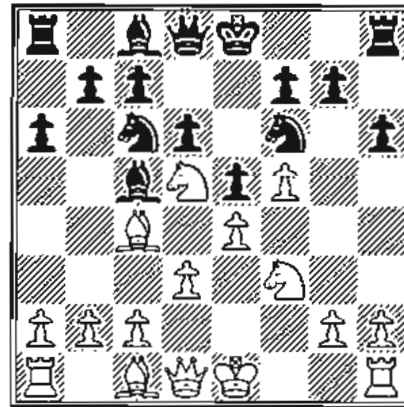


White chooses to close the position. This policy is particularly good when Black has already castled but in this case he has the choice of seeking sanctuary for the king on the queenside.

7...h6

It is almost a golden rule for Black to play this move after f5 in order to stop the knight being pinned with 8 ♕g5.

8 ♘d5



8...♘a5

Smejkal decides to exchange the white-squared bishop before it becomes involved in an attack.

A popular continuation for Black is to play 8...♘d4 in preparation of ...c7-c6. Also possible:

a) 8...♘d4, preparing ...c7-c6, was tried in Tomescu-Bracaglia, Padova 1999, which continued 9 c3 ♘xf3+ 10 ♖xf3 c6 11 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 12 g4 b5 13 ♘b3 ♘b7 14 h4 0-0-0 15 g5 ♖e7 16 f6 gxf6 17 gxh6 and the passed pawn on h6 proved to be a long-term problem for Black.

b) 8...♘a7 9 a3 (9 c3 0-0 10 ♖e2 intending ♘e3 to cut out the influence of the bishop on a7 and allow kingside castling) 9...♘d4 10 ♘e3? (a mistake which can be exploited by tactical means) 10...♘xd5 11 ♘xd5 ♘xc2+ 12 ♖xc2 ♘xe3 with a clear advantage, Blanco Gutierrez - Korneev, Ferrol 2002.

9 b4 ♘xd5

If 9...♖xc4 then White is slightly better after 10 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 11 bxc5 ♖a5 12 cxd6 cxd6 13 ♜b1.

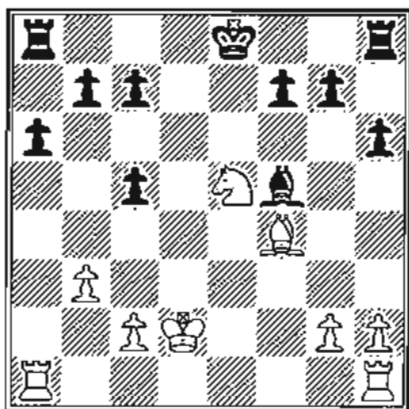
10 bxc5 ♖f6?!

An invitation to complicate matters when Black should prefer the clarity that comes with 10...♖xc4. For example: 11 exd5 ♖a5 12 ♔d2 b6 13 cxb6 (Conquest suggests 13 c6 ♔xf5 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♗e1 with unclear play) 13...cxb6 14 ♔xa5 bxa5 15 0-0 ♔xf5 16 ♖xe5 dxe5 17 ♜xf5 ♗xd5 18 d4! ♗xd4+ 19 ♗xd4 exd4 20 ♜e1+ with a draw the likely outcome.

11 ♔b3 dxc5 12 ♖xe5 ♖xb3 13 axb3 ♗d4

13...♔xf5 14 ♔b2 (14 exf5?! ♗d4 regains the piece) 14...♔e6 15 0-0 0-0 16 ♗f3 gives White decent attacking chances for the sacrificed pawn.

14 ♔f4 ♖xe4 15 dxe4 ♗xe4+ 16 ♗e2 ♗xe2+ 17 ♖xe2 ♔xf5 18 ♖d2



White has the advantage because the extra piece can help to create threats against the king and make sure the three extra black pawns do not easily advance.

18...f6 19 ♖d3 0-0-0 20 ♜a5! ♜d7

Smejkal needs to advance his pawns to create a passed pawn that will force White to defend. The only snag is that patience is required because 20...g5? fails to 21 ♔xc7 ♖xc7 22 ♜xc5+ ♖b8 23 ♜xf5 and White wins.

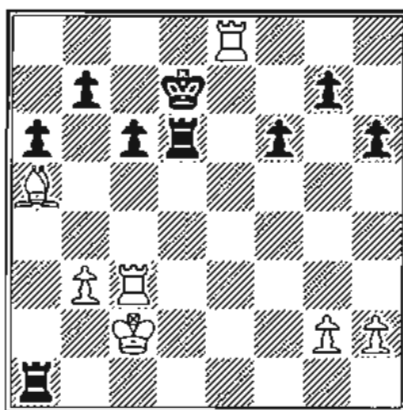
21 ♜e1

A calm approach. 21 ♜xc5 would have allowed Black counterplay by 21...♔e4 22 ♜g1 f5.

21...♔xd3 22 cxd3 ♜hd8 23 ♜xc5 ♜xd3+ 24 ♖c2 c6 25 ♜e7 ♜3d7

The White initiative is difficult to resist and 25...♜8d7 is no improvement due to 26 ♜xg7! ♜xg7 27 ♖xd3 ♜xg2 28 ♜h5 winning.

26 ♜e2 ♜d1 27 ♔d2 ♜f1 28 ♔a5 ♜d6 29 ♜c3 ♜a1 30 ♜e8+ ♖d7



31 ♜ce3!

It is easy to offer the bishop as a sacrifice when you can deliver mate next move! Conquest has played very well to make sure Black has had no real chances to advance his pawns.

31...c5 32 ♖3e7+ ♔c6 33 ♖c8+ ♔d5

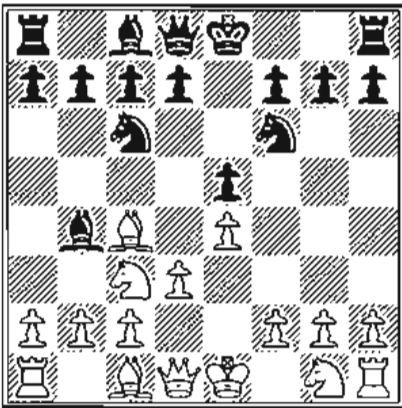
Or 33...♔b5 34 ♖xb7+ ♔xa5 35 ♖xc5 mate.

34 ♔c7 ♖a2+ 35 ♔d3 ♖xg2 36 ♔xd6 ♔xd6 37 ♖xb7 g5 38 ♖b6+ ♔d5 39 ♖d8+ ♔e5 40 ♖e8+ ♔f5 41 ♖e2 ♖g1 42 ♖f2+ ♔g4 43 ♖bxf6 h5 1-0

It is possible that Black will try to avoid a kingside pawn storm by means of another line which involves 4...♔b4.

Kosteniuk – Werner
Wijk aan Zee 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 ♖f6 3 ♖c3 ♖c6 4 d3 ♔b4



One of the most popular replies. Pinning the knight prepares ...d7-d5.

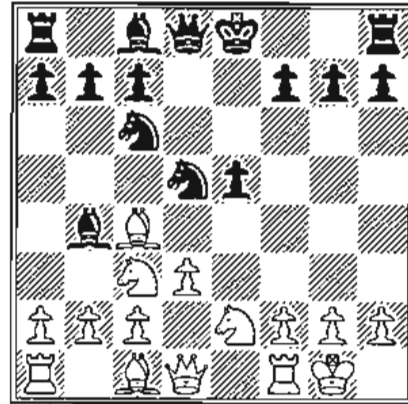
5 ♖ge2

White defends the knight so any exchange will not result in doubled pawns.

5...d5

5...d6 is a solid if uninspiring reply. White should try castling kingside followed by ♔g5 and f4.

6 exd5 ♖xd5 7 0-0



7...♔e6

Black seeks to maintain the tension in the centre. Also possible:

a) 7...♖xc3 8 bxc3 ♔e7 9 ♖g3 ♖a5 10 ♔b3 0-0 11 ♖h5 ♖xb3 12 axb3 ♖e8 13 ♖e1 ♔e6 14 ♔b2 f6 15 d4 ♔d6 16 ♖e4 ♔f7 17 ♖f3 exd4 18 cxd4 ♔b4 19 c3 ♔f8 gave equal chances in A.Ledger-Mestel, British Championship 1997.

b) 7...♔xc3 8 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 9 bxc3 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♖a5 11 ♔b3 ♖e8 12 f4 ♖xb3 13 axb3 exf4 14 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 15 ♔xf4 c6 16 ♖d2 ♔e6 with equality in Magem - De la Villa, Pamplona 1996.

c) 7...♖b6!? 8 ♔b3 0-0 9 ♖e4 ♖a5 10 ♔g5 ♔e7 11 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 12 ♖d2 ♖xb3 13 axb3 ♖d5 14 ♖4c3 ♖b4 15 f4 b6 16 fxe5 ♖xe5 17 d4 ♖e7 18 ♖g3 ♔e6 19 ♖ae1 ♖ad8 20 ♖ce4 c5 21 c3 ♖c6? 22 ♖f6+! (a clever use of the knights in the attack) 22...gxf6 23 ♖h6 f5 24 ♖h5 1-0 Kaidanov-Ibragimov, Philadelphia 1992.

8 ♔b3

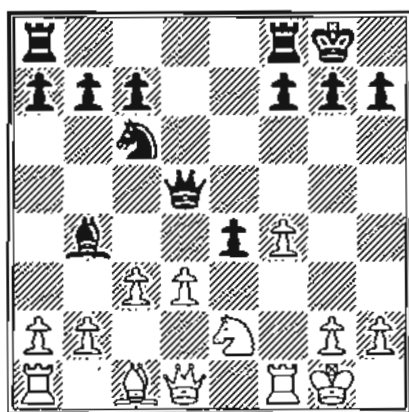
White is content to be patient and avoid ...♖xc3 followed by ...♔xc4

and make sure that if the bishop on b3 is exchanged then at least axb3 will open up the a-file. Ale-Geus, corr 1983, saw instead an amusing miniature 8 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 9 f4 exf4 10 ♖xf4 ♖e7 11 ♖fxd5 ♖xd5 12 ♖h5! 1-0. I suggest that Black should keep the f-file closed and try 9...0-0 when play might continue 10 f5 f6 11 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 12 ♖g3 ♖h8 13 ♖e4 with slightly the better chances.

8...0-0 9 ♖xd5

The policy of wait and see was evident in Rogers-J.Parker, 4NCL British Team Championship 1998, when White played 9 ♖h1 to avoid annoying checks on the g1-a7 diagonal after f4. The game continued 9...♖e8 10 f4 ♖xc3 11 bxc3 f6 12 ♖d2 ♖h8 13 f5 ♖g8 14 ♖g3 a5 15 ♖g4 when White had some attacking chances on the kingside.

9...♖xd5 10 f4 e4 11 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 12 c3



12...exd3?

Whoops! I can only assume that Black forgot about the pin on the d-file otherwise he would have

played 12...♖c5+ 13 d4 ♖e7 14 ♖b3 with equal chances.

13 cxb4 ♖ad8 14 ♖c3 ♖d4+ 15 ♖f2 ♖xb4

It has to be said that Black has got some compensation for the piece in the form of two pawns, including a passer on d3. However, White is definitely the favourite because the extra piece allows him to create some threats of his own against the black king.

16 ♖d2 ♖c2 17 ♖c1 a6 18 f5 b5 19 f6 g6 20 ♖f3 ♖fe8 21 ♖cf1 ♖e3 22 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 23 ♖f4 ♖xf4

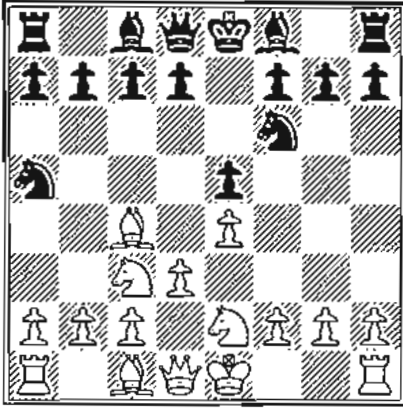
Werner has little choice considering that allowing ♖h6 leads to mate. The ending is completely lost because the extra piece just rounds up the pawns and the white king is also handily placed to exert its influence.

24 ♖xf4 c5 25 ♖e4 ♖xe4 26 ♖xe4 c4 27 ♖f2 h6 28 ♖e3 g5 29 ♖d2 ♖h7 30 g4 ♖g6 31 h3 ♖e8 32 ♖e1 ♖e5 33 ♖e3 b4 34 ♖e1 ♖a5 35 ♖c1 ♖xa2 36 ♖xc4 ♖xb2+ 37 ♖xd3 ♖b3+ 38 ♖d4 a5 39 ♖c8 a4 40 ♖g8+ ♖h7 41 ♖g7+ ♖h8 42 ♖d6 1-0

In the following game Black seeks to exchange pieces as soon as possible with 4...♖a5.

Mirumian – Wells Berlin 1999

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♖f6 3 ♖c3 ♖c6 4 d3 ♖a5 5 ♖ge2

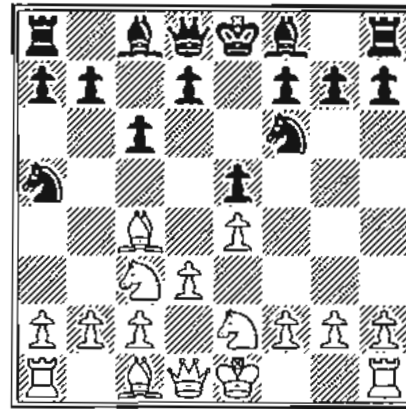


5...c6

Black controls the d5 square and proposes to expand on the queenside with ...b7-b5. The emphasis is not on a quick ...d7-d5 because if that happens White will exchange pawns on d5, followed by ♖b5+ and then try to undermine the central pawns. For fans of transpositions the actual move-order was 1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♘f6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 ♘c3 ♘a5 5 ♘ge2. 5...♘xc4 is the main alternative but Black has a couple of other tries available:

a) 5...d6 (this position can also arise after 1 e4 d6 2 ♘c3 e5 3 ♗c4 ♘f6 4 d3 ♘c6 5 ♘ge2 ♘a5) 6 ♘g3 ♘xc4 7 dxc4 ♗e6 8 ♖d3 g6 9 h4 c6 10 h5 ♗e7 11 hxg6 fxg6 12 ♗h6 ♖c7 13 ♘f1 0-0-0 14 ♘e3 which led to equal chances in Kogan-Beliavsky, Nova Gorica 2000.

b) 5...♗e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♘g3 d6 8 a4 (8 f4 exf4 9 ♗xf4 c6 intending ...d7-d5 with equality) 8...♘xc4 9 dxc4 c6 10 ♖d3 (perhaps 10 d3) 10...♗e6 11 ♗g5 ♘d7 12 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 13 ♖fd1 ♘c5 14 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 15 ♖xd6 ♗xc4 16 b3 ♗e6 17 ♖ad1 and the ending was equal in Mirumian-Hebden, Cappelle la Grande 1997.



6 a4

White puts a block on b7-b5. A number of different ideas have been explored at this stage:

a) 6 a3 (White intends to meet 6...b5 with 7 ♗a2) 6...♘xc4 7 dxc4 d6 8 ♖d3 ♗e7 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗xf6 (10 ♗h4!? should be considered) 10...♗xf6 11 ♖d1 ♗e6 12 b3 ♖a5 13 a4 ♖d8 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♖f3 ♗g5 16 ♘g3 g6 17 ♖d3 f5 and Black had the better chances in Tomescu-Godena, Saint Vincent 1999.

b) 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 a4 d5 (7...♘xc4 8 dxc4 d6 9 ♖d3 is similar to the main game) 8 ♗a2 ♗e6 9 d4!? ♘xe4 (9...exd4?! 10 ♘xd4 favours White) 10 ♘xe4 dxe4 11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 dxe5 ♖xd1 13 ♖xd1 ♘c4 when the attack on the e5 pawn ensures equality, Karjakin-Bologan, Mainz 2004.

6...♘xc4

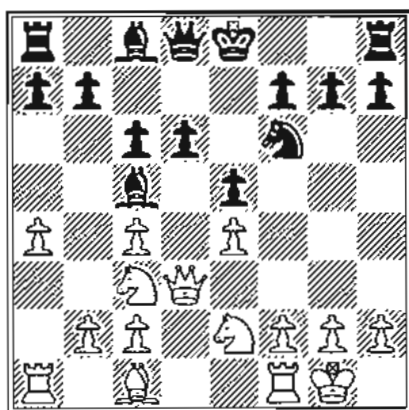
If Black fails to exchange pieces then the bishop will go to a2 leaving the knight on a5 looking silly.

7 dxc4 ♗c5 8 0-0

Kuijf-Onischuk, Wijk aan Zee 1996, saw White play more energetically with f3 intending to

open up the possibility of throwing his kingside pawns forward if Black castles kingside. After 8...d6 9 ♖d3 ♙e6 10 b3 a5 11 ♙e3 ♜b6 12 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 the position was equal.

8...d6 9 ♖d3



If in doubt put the queen on d3. This move is usually central to White's middlegame plan to protect c4 and put pressure on the d-file. The alternative is 9 b3, intending ♙a3 hitting the d6 pawn.

9...♙e6 10 b3 0-0 11 ♙e3 ♙b4 12 ♖ad1 ♜e7 13 ♘a2 ♙a5 14 ♙g5 h6

Wells could have played 14...♖ad8 to defend the d-pawn but sacrifices it in order to seek winning chances with the help of his more active pieces.

15 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 16 ♜xd6 ♖fd8 17 ♜a3 ♙g4 18 ♘ac1 ♖xd1 19 ♖xd1 ♖d8 20 ♖d3!

Upon 20 ♖xd3?! ♜xd3 the black queen will invade the white camp on d1 or d2 with the better game.

20...♖xd3 21 cxd3 ♜g5 22 ♜b2 ♙b6 23 ♜c2 ♙c5 24 ♘a2 a5 25 ♘ac3

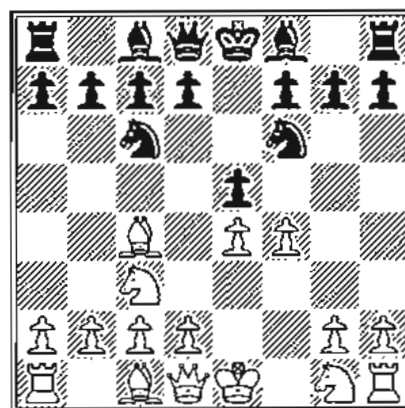
Mirumian has successfully held off the attack but it is difficult to make progress with improving the position of his pieces so as to enable him to convert the extra pawn into a victory.

25...h5 26 ♜c1 ♜f6 27 ♜f1 h4 28 h3 ½-½

And now for a touch of variety. White will attempt to persuade Black to meet 4 f4 passively, thereby ensuring that the dark-squared bishop is not posted aggressively on c5 or b4.

Pedersen – Frausing Aarhus 1972

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 f4



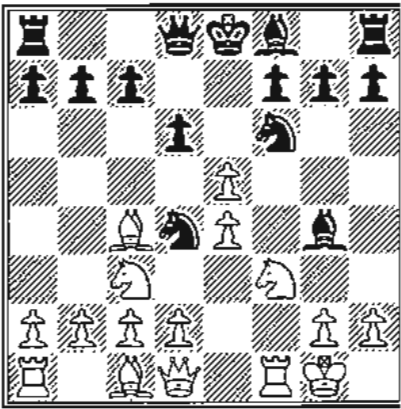
If you are looking for something a little bit different I think this might be a good way to avoid the lines associated with 4 d3.

4...d6

Black understandably defends the e-pawn but that rules out all the

options involving moving the king's bishop to c5 or b4. Instead 4...exf4 transposes to a line from the King's Gambit. For example: 5 ♖f3 ♗b4 6 e5 ♘g4 7 0-0 0-0 (7...♘gxe5 8 ♙e1 is irritating for Black) 8 d4 d6 9 exd6 ♗xd6 10 ♘e4 led to a double edged position in Simacek-Postny, Pardubice 2004.

5 ♖f3 ♗g4 6 0-0 ♘d4 7 fxe5



7...♗xf3

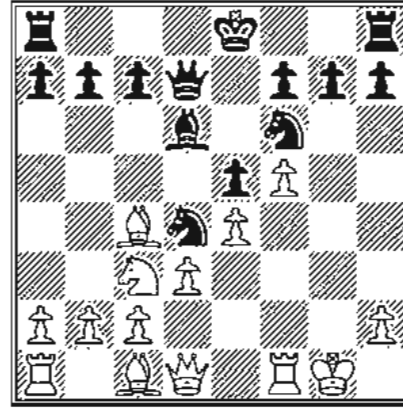
Black has to be cautious because 7...dxe5? is a classic mistake where numerous players have stolen the advantage by 8 ♗xf7+ when, for example, Fussnecker-Stock, Gross Gerau 2000, continued 8...♙xf7 9 ♘xe5+ ♚e8 10 ♘xg4 ♗e7 11 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12 e5! ♗e7 (or 12...♗xe5 13 ♙h5+ wins) 13 ♙g4 ♗g8 14 ♙e4 h6 15 e6 ♙d6 16 ♘d5 1-0.

8 gxf3 dxe5 9 f4

An aggressive approach in keeping with the opening.

9...♗d6 10 d3 ♙d7 11 f5

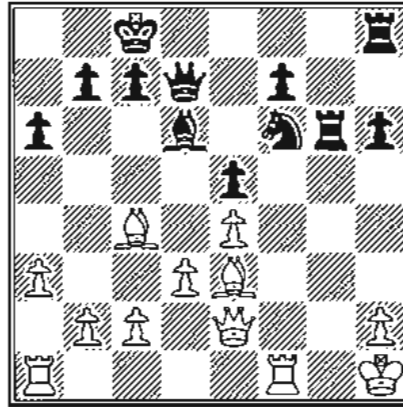
An idea that regularly occurs in this line. With this pawn advance White closes the game.



11...h6 12 ♗e3 a6 13 ♙h1 0-0-0 14 a3 ♗d8

Frausing is eager to start counterattacking on the kingside but any lunge with the pawns runs a risk because the white pieces are well placed.

15 ♘e2 ♘xe2 16 ♙xe2 g5 17 fxg6 ♗xg6



18 ♗f5!

A nice way to cut off the black queen and prepare to double rooks on the f-file.

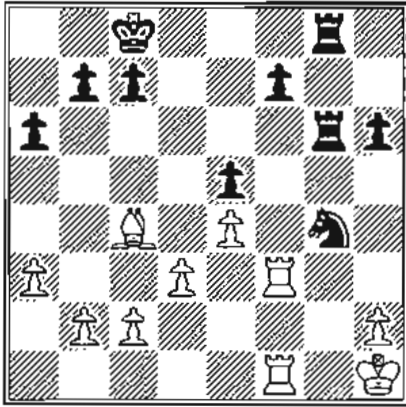
18...♙e7 19 ♗af1 ♗hg8 20 ♙f3

A simple but effective plan to bolster the pressure on the f-file. Black now finds a clever resource but White remains on top.

20...♗c5 21 ♗xc5 ♙xc5 22 ♙f2

Not 22 ♖xf6?? which walks into 22... ♗g1+ 23 ♖xg1 ♖xg1 mate.

22... ♗xf2 23 ♖5xf2 ♘g4 24 ♖f3



24... ♘xh2?

A wild choice but otherwise White will win after the f-pawn is removed from the board.

25 ♖xh2 ♖g2+ 26 ♖h3 ♖xc2 27 ♖3f2

When a piece ahead it makes sense to swap off pieces.

27... ♖xf2 28 ♖xf2 ♖g1 29 ♖xf7 b5 30 ♖e6+ ♖b7 31 ♖d5+ ♖b6 32 ♖f6+ ♖c5 1-0

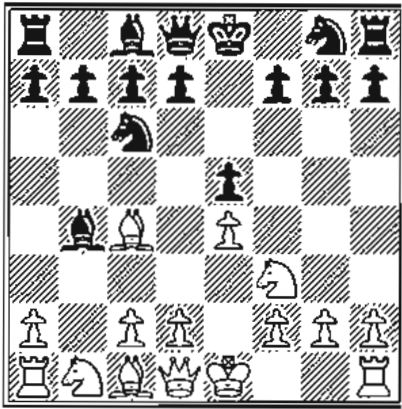
Conclusion

An opportunity to confuse Black by transposing into an aggressive version of the Vienna is revealed in Lane-Jackson. I managed to enjoy a sharp attack which left Black in a mess. The decision to exchange the light-squared bishop with 6... ♘a5 is understandable in view of the fact that it is usually an integral part of

the White attack. However, Mitkov-Rocha demonstrates that White has a small but lasting initiative. Fedorov-Norri sees Black dealing with White's aggressive set-up by trying 6... ♖e6 to relieve the potential pressure. White responds accurately and is rewarded with a quick victory. The kingside pawn storm is a regular feature of this line and Hebden-Martinovsky confirms that Black has to be careful not to be swamped. However, it does result in double-edged play. Conquest-Smejkal is a game where Black seeks sanctuary for his bishop by playing 6... a6. The policy of 'if in doubt start advancing the kingside pawns' is the answer and 7 f5 works well. After 5 ♘ge2 Black can equalise fairly easily by playing 5... d5 which was discussed in Kosteniuk-Werner. From White's point of view the line has still attracted a number of followers who want to push for victory while preserving the option of a draw. Black has solid options available such as ... ♘a5 and ... c6 which is explored in Mirumian-Wells. The draw is predictable but there is scope for improvement. I could not resist including Pedersen-Frausing which introduces the idea of 4 f4, hoping that the automatic response 4... d6 will cut out a number of Black options. In this case the result is a triumph for White's attacking strategy.

Evans Gambit Accepted

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗c6 3 ♖f3 ♘c5 4
b4 ♘xb4



History

The inventor of this opening was William Evans (1790-1872), a sea captain who played most of his chess on a mail boat as it travelled between Ireland and Wales. His claim to fame in the chess world was assured in the 1820/30s when he played and analysed his gambit with the leading players in Britain. It gained instant respect and had the seal of approval from Steinitz, Chigorin and Morphy. Since then it has gone in and out of fashion although Garry Kasparov catapulted it back into the headlines when he sensationally defeated Anand with it in 1995. This has since inspired

various grandmasters, in particular former world title contender Nigel Short.

Now that weekend tournaments and club matches increasingly have fast time limits, the importance of opening play will continue to grow. It is highly likely that at the top level 'forgotten' variations, such as romantic gambit lines, will be investigated for new ideas and unleashed like a thunderbolt on an unsuspecting opponent. The rationale is that even if a variation is not completely sound the large amount of time the opponent has to spend working out a defence against it is worth every bit a pawn. Therefore, obvious sources for openings that provide an initiative and an encouraging attack are gambits.

White wins

Soltysik – Davidovic

Australian Junior Championships
2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 ♗c6 3 ♖f3 ♘c5 4
b4

The move that marks the start of the Evans Gambit. For the sake of a pawn White will be rewarded with quick development and open lines for attack.

4... ♖xb4

It is worth noting that 4... ♖xb4 transposes to the main game after 5 c3 ♘c6 6 d4.

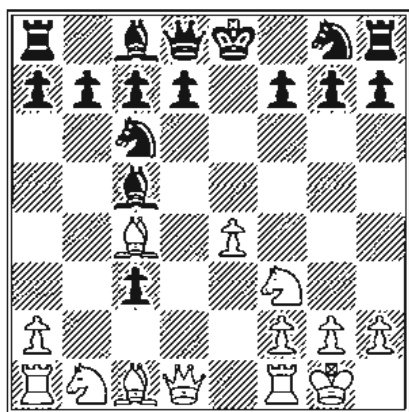
5 c3 ♘c5

I think this is exactly what White wants because he can gain time by advancing the d-pawn to attack the bishop, while at the same time striving to establish a pawn centre.

6 d4 exd4 7 0-0

White continues in accepted fashion by carrying on developing.

7... dxc3?



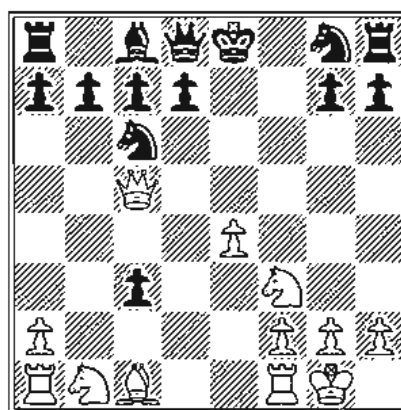
Black can resist anything except temptation. I have to admit that whenever I have coached players it is this line of the Evans Gambit that occurs the most often at club level. It seems that Black can just keep on taking pawns and hope to fend off the imminent attack by handing back some material.

8 ♘xf7+!

The opportunity to deprive Black of castling rights is the best move. It

means that White's attack is accelerated just when the king is stuck in the centre of the board.

8... ♖xf7 9 ♖d5+ ♖e8 10 ♖xc5



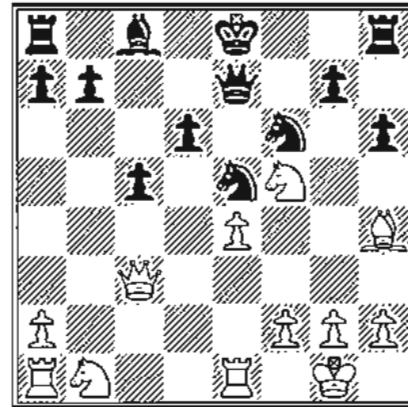
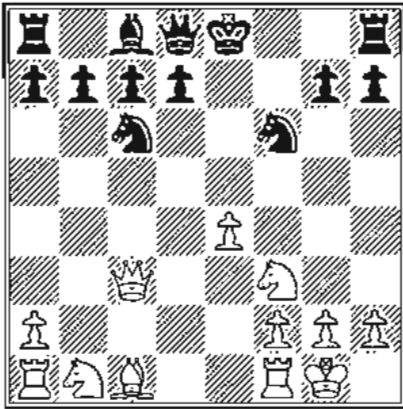
10... ♖f6

Also possible:

a) 10... ♖f6 11 e5 (11 ♖xc3 is what Black wants because 11... ♖xc3 12 ♖xc3 ♖ge7 allows an ending where Black has an extra pawn) 11... d6 12 exf6! dxc5 13 fxg7 and White will take the rook and promote to a queen with an easy win, Weber-Culleron, Bratto 1999;

b) 10... d6 11 ♖xc3 ♖f6 12 e5! (White is a pawn down and rightly would rather shed another one temporarily than allow the attack to be restrained by exchanging queens) 12... dxe5 13 ♖e1 ♖ge7 14 ♘g5 ♖f5 15 ♖xe5! ♘e6 [or 15... ♖xg5 16 ♖xc6 bxc6 17 ♖xc6+ ♖f7 18 ♖xa8 wins] 16 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 17 ♖xg7 with a crushing attack) 17... ♖f8 18 f3 ♖c5+ 19 ♖h1 ♖d4 20 ♘f6 ♖b4 21 ♖c3 ♖f7 22 ♖g8+ ♖f8 23 ♖xe6+ ♖d7 24 ♖g4 ♖xc3 25 ♖e3+ 1-0 Goreskul-Vrbikova, Moravia 1996.

11 ♖xc3



White regains a pawn and still has a tremendous initiative. The long-term problem for Black is that the king is marooned in the centre of the board. In a previous game Soltysik had tried 11 ♖g5 against Benamani, at the World Junior Championships 2001. That game went 11 ♖g5 ♜f8? (11...d6 12 ♜xc3 is similar to the main game) 12 e5 ♘e4 13 ♜xf8+! ♙xf8 14 ♙xd8 ♘xd8 15 ♜e1 ♘c5 16 ♘xc3 with an advantage.

11...d6 12 ♙g5 ♜e7

This looks odd but without the option of castling Black is already running out of constructive ideas. Here the intention is to try to put off White from advancing the e-pawn by adding the queen to Black's observation of the e5 square.

13 ♜e1 ♘e5 14 ♘d4 h6

The clumsy attempt to castle artificially with 14...♙f7, intending ...♜f8 and ...♙g8, fails to impress upon 15 f4! ♘eg4 16 e5. The theme of the pin prompts Black's decline after 16...dxe5 17 fxe5 ♘xe5 18 ♙f4 ♘fd7 19 ♜b3+ ♙e8 20 ♜g3 when White will win a piece.

15 ♙h4 c5 16 ♘f5

16...♙xf5?!

Davidovic eliminates the dangerous knight but at the cost of perilously opening the e-file. Black is in trouble anyway because 16...♜d7 runs into 17 f4! ♘g6 18 ♙xf6 gxf6 19 ♜xf6 ♜g8 20 ♘xd6+ when he can give up.

17 exf5

Now the simple threat of f2-f4 spells disaster for Black.

17...♜d7 18 f4 ♜xf5 19 fxe5 ♘d7 20 exd6+ ♙f8 21 ♜f1 1-0

The obvious 5...♙c5 is not just a duffer's move – some useful players have also given it a go. Even so I would back White who at least can gain time by attacking the bishop.

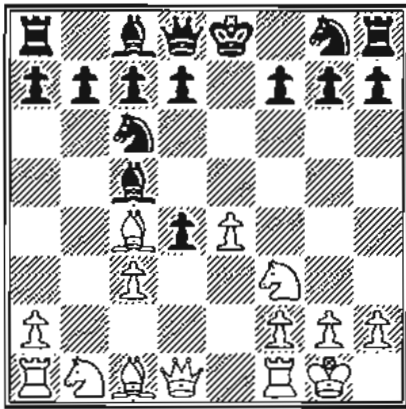
Rabiega – Haznedaroglu

European Championship,
Ohrid 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♙c5 4 b4 ♙xb4 5 c3 ♙c5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0

This is the accepted way of posing Black problems in the opening by giving him plenty of chances to go

wrong. Instead 7 cxd4 fails to impress upon 7...♙b4+ 8 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 9 ♖bxd2 d6 with roughly equal chances.



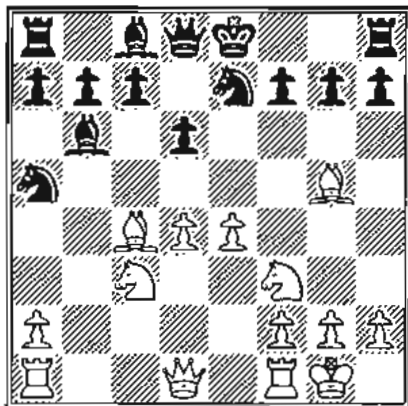
7...d3?!

Black hopes that declining the sacrifice will make White's development more difficult by stopping the queen's knight coming to the c3 square. 7...dxc3? was examined in the introductory game Soltysik-Davidovic.

Also possible is 7...d6 which is an important line because although Black concedes the centre he hopes to undermine it later. 8 cxd4 ♙b6 9 ♖c3:

and now:

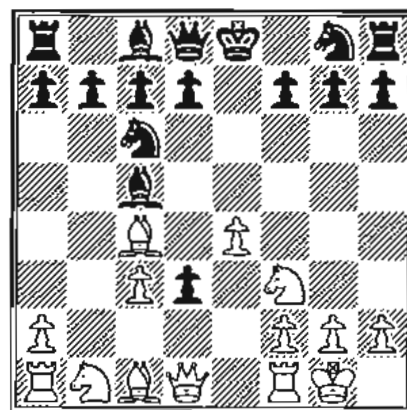
a) 9...♖a5 10 ♙g5 ♖e7



a1) I think White should maintain the tension with 11 ♖d5. For example: 11...f6 12 ♙f4 (12 ♙xf6 gxf6 13 ♖xf6+ ♖f8 14 ♖g5 ♖xc4 15 ♗h5 ♖g7 16 ♗f7+ ♖h6 17 ♗h5+ ♖g7 with a draw by perpetual check) 12...♖xc4 13 ♗a4+ ♙d7 14 ♗xc4 ♖xd5 15 ♗xd5 ♙c6 16 ♗h5+ g6 17 ♗h6 is double-edged.

a2) 11 ♙xf7+ forces a draw and has been played a number of times: 11...♖xf7 12 ♖d5 ♗e8 13 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 14 ♖g5+ ♖g8 15 ♗h5! h6! 16 ♗g6 hxg5 17 ♖f6+ ♖f8 18 ♖h7+ ♖g8 19 ♖f6+ 1/2-1/2 Schertz-Krannich, Mainz 1996.

b) 9...♙g4 10 ♙b5 ♙xf3 (10...♖f8 is an admission that something has gone wrong and allows White to continue with 11 ♙e3 and gradually increase the pressure) 11 gxf3 ♖f8 12 ♙e3 ♖ce7 13 ♖h1 c6 14 ♙d3 with a slight advantage, Nogueiras-Campora, Bogota 1979.



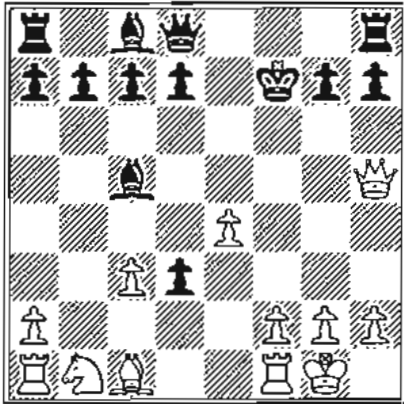
8 ♖g5!

An inspired move which propels the attack. Black has a good record after 8 ♗xd3?! which misses the best opportunity. For instance: 8...d6 9 e5 ♖ge7 10 exd6 ♙xd6 11

♠e1 ♘a5 12 ♙d5 0-0 (Black's king is safe and he has an extra pawn – so the opening has been a success) 13 ♙g5? ♙xh2+ 14 ♚xh2 ♜xd5 15 ♜xd5 ♘xd5 0-1 Ribeiro-Grippon, Cappelle la Grande 1996.

Of course 8...♘e5 transposes to the game after 9 ♘xf7! ♘xf7 10 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 11 ♜h5+.

8...♘h6 9 ♘xf7! ♘xf7 10 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 11 ♜h5+



This queen check not only allows White to recover his piece but also to keep the attack going because of the exposed position of the black king.

11...g6 12 ♜xc5 d6 13 ♜e3 ♠e8 14 ♜xd3 ♜h4?!

The black queen does not prove itself to be a good defender because White just gains time by attacking it. Perhaps 14...♚g7 should be considered.

15 f4 ♚g8 16 ♘d2 ♜e7 17 c4!

The c-pawn is pushed forward in anticipation of a bishop taking up residence on b2. This will be dangerous for Black who will have problems blocking the b2-h8 diagonal.

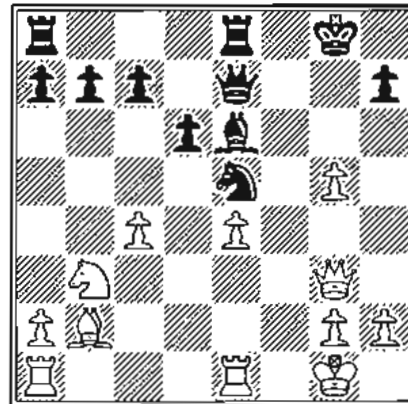
17...♜f6 18 ♘b3

A neat move, which protects the rook and stops Black from cutting short White's attack by playing ...♜d4+ and exchanging queens.

18...♜e7 19 ♠e1 g5

It seems that Black is giving away a pawn for no reason but in fact the idea is to subsequently close the dark-squared diagonal by planting a knight on e5.

20 fxg5 ♙e6 21 ♙b2 ♘e5 22 ♜g3



22...♙xc4

If you start counting the pawns then Black is on level terms but in fact White's attack tips the scales in his favour. If 22...♙xc4 then 23 ♙f6 ♜f7 24 ♘d4, intending 25 ♘f5, accelerates the offensive.

23 ♘d4 ♠f8 24 ♘f5 ♜e6 25 a4

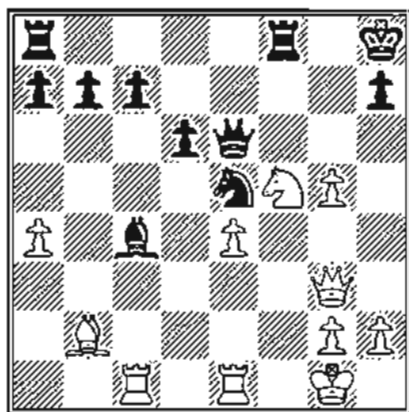
A little finesse because White wants to play ♠a1 without allowing the bishop to be adequately defended by ...b7-b5.

25...♚h8?

Black is under pressure but placing the king on such a poorly defended diagonal is a mistake.

25...♖fe8? comes under fire after 26 ♖ac1 ♗ac8 27 ♕xe5 dxe5 28 g6! winning. In the circumstances 25...a6! is the best chance, intending ...b7-b5.

26 ♖ac1!



White steps up the pressure with the latest threat being 27 ♖xc4 ♗xc4 28 ♕xe5+ winning.

26...♖fe8

Instead 26...♗ae8 27 ♘e3 ♕a6 28 ♖xc7 or 26...♖ac8 27 ♖xc4! ♗xc4 28 ♕xe5+ decides.

27 ♘e3

This was the original plan so that the rook can invade the seventh rank. White is rather spoilt for choice because 27 g6! is also strong since 27...hxg6 28 ♖xc4 ♗xc4 29 ♗xg6 leads to mate.

27...♕a6 28 ♖xc7 ♖ac8 29 ♘d5 ♖f8 30 ♖e7 1-0

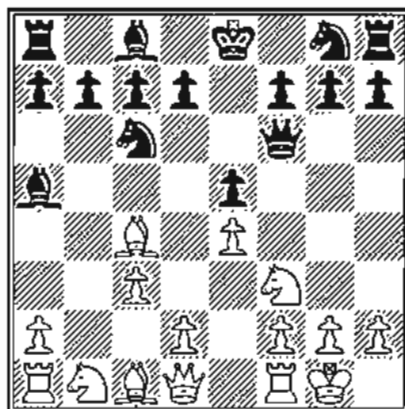
Perhaps a good way to understand the background about the opening is to step back in time:

Gunsberg – Steinitz
Game 12, World Championship
New York 1891

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♕c5 4 b4 ♖xb4 5 c3 ♕a5

The original reason why this move was preferred was that it stopped White from building a pawn centre because 6 d4 is met by 6...exd4 and the c-pawn is pinned.

6 0-0 ♗f6?



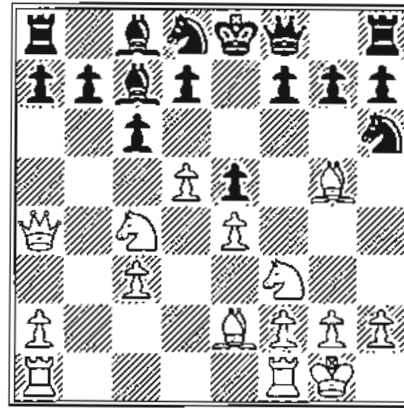
Steinitz was admired by Bobby Fischer who said that he was ahead of his time as regards opening theory. However, there are exceptions and this early excursion of the queen has not stood the test of time because the lady will soon be chased away by White's pieces.

7 d4 ♘h6

A few games later in this match Steinitz, again defending as Black, decided to innovate – but this led to an even quicker defeat. There followed 7...h6?! 8 ♗a4 ♕b6 9 ♕b5 ♘ge7 10 ♕a3 exd4 11 e5 (the black queen is put under pressure) 11...♗g6 12 cxd4 ♘d5 13 ♖e1 ♘f4 14 g3 ♗g4 15 ♘bd2 ♘h3+ (the attack is taking place without his

queenside pieces and is doomed to failure without these as reinforcements) 16 ♖g2 ♔g5 17 ♙b2 ♕e7 18 ♙e2 ♕e6 19 ♖h1 ♗f5 20 ♕h4 ♗xf2? (the queen will now be trapped although Black was already in difficulties) 21 ♕e4 1-0 Gunsberg-Steinitz, Game 21, New York 1891. It is nice to think that over 100 years later someone else played 7...h6 and was also soundly thrashed. You can guess who has no idea of chess history from this example: 8 dxe5 ♕xe5 9 ♕xe5 ♗xe5 10 ♗b3 ♗h5 11 ♙a3 c6 12 ♕d2 ♙d8 (a strange move but the idea is to go 12...♕e7 which if played at once allows 13 ♙xe7 and Black is forced to give up castling rights) 13 e5! (the pawn makes room for the knight to occupy the e4 square where it will have a bigger influence) 13...♕e7 14 f4 0-0 15 ♕e4 b5 16 ♙d3 ♗g4 17 f5 (White's attack continues to make progress with this advance of the f5 pawn. Because his pieces on the queenside are asleep the big problem for Black is that it is difficult to organise a defence) 17...♕d5 18 ♖f3 (18 ♙xf8 is simple and good) 18...♖e8 (I think 18...♙b6+! 19 ♖h1 ♖e8 is the best chance of survival) 19 ♙d6 ♕f4 20 ♖g3 ♕e2+ 21 ♙xe2 ♗xe4 (or 21...♗xe2 22 f6 g6 23 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 24 ♗xf7 and effectively the game is over) 22 ♙d3 ♗a4 23 f6! (Black is busted!) 23...♗xb3 24 ♖xg7+ ♖h8 25 axb3 ♙b6+ 26 ♖h1 ♙b7 27 ♖xf7 c5 28 ♖h7+ ♖g8 29 f7 mate 1-0 Richmond-Noakes, 4 NCL, British Team Championship 1999.

8 ♙g5 ♗d6 9 d5 ♕d8 10 ♗a4 ♙b6 11 ♕a3 c6 12 ♙e2! ♙c7 13 ♕c4 ♗f8



Black's position already looks a shambles. In those days players thought that as long as you could hold on to the gambit pawn then something would turn up. It took a while for people to realise that this was by no means always the case and it helped to usher in a new school of thought on chess.

14 d6 ♙xd6 15 ♕b6 ♖b8 16 ♗xa7 ♕g4 17 ♕h4!

The knight is heading for f5 to attack the bishop on d6 and consequently undermine the defence of the hapless rook on b8.

17...♕e6

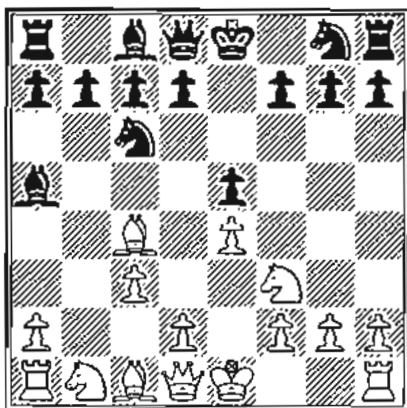
17...♕f6 runs into 18 ♕f5 ♙c7 19 ♙xf6 gxf6 20 ♕a8 and Black can resign with honour.

18 ♙xg4 ♕xg5 19 ♕f5 ♕e6 20 ♖fd1 ♙c7 21 ♕a8 ♖xa8 22 ♗xa8 ♕d8 23 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 24 ♖d1+ 1-0

In modern chess this opening still manages to catch people out:

Kuipers – Sparenberg
Hengelo 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♜c6 3 ♘f3 ♙c5 4
b4 ♙xb4 5 c3 ♙a5



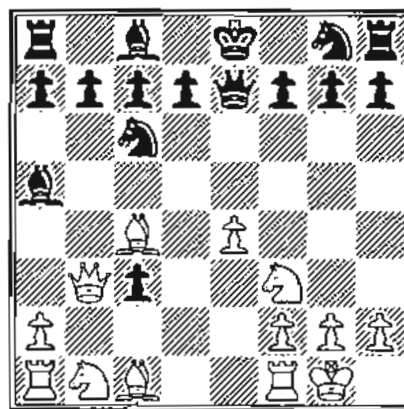
The original thinking behind this retreat is that on 6 d4 Black can play 6...exd4 when the c-pawn is pinned, which stops White from rapidly constructing a pawn centre.

6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 dxc3?!

It rarely is a good idea to be greedy when playing Black in this opening because White can usually whip up an attack very quickly.

8 ♗b3 ♗e7

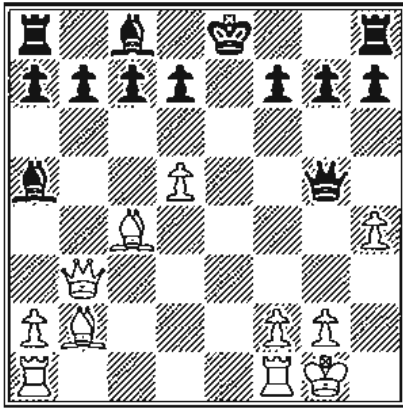
8...♗f6 was tested in the relatively unknown game Fischer-Peil, simultaneous, Houston 1964: 9 e5 ♜xe5? (a blunder but who wants to be attacked by Fischer? Instead 9...♗g6 10 ♜xc3 ♜ge7 11 ♙a3 leads to double-edged play) 10 ♜e1 ♜e7 11 ♜xe5 0-0 12 ♙g5 ♗g6 13 ♙xe7 when Black could resign but he struggled on for a while in the hope that the game would never be published!



9 ♙g5

9 ♜xc3 is the alternative and a look in the classic book *My 60 Memorable Games* by Bobby Fischer would indicate that it should be considered. For instance: Fischer-Fine, New York 1963 continued 9...♜f6? (9...♙xc3 10 ♗xc3 f6 [10...♜f6 11 ♙a3 d6 12 e5 ♜e4 13 ♗b2 ♜xe5 14 ♜xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♜fe1! gives White a winning advantage] 11 ♙a3 d6 12 ♙d5 ♙d7 13 ♜ab1 0-0-0 14 ♜d4 is very good for White. In fact, Fischer reckoned an old analysis from Freeborough and Rankin (1893) is the right way to defend: 9...♗b4! 10 ♙xf7+ ♙d8 (I think this line is important because Fischer still has a huge influence but Black needs to do better than the game Konijn-Santos, Haarlem 2004, where 10...♙f8?? ran into 11 ♙a3 1-0) 11 ♙g5+ (11 ♙xg8? ♗xb3! is fine for Black) 11...♜ge7 12 ♜d5 ♗xb3 13 axb3 ♙b6 (13...♙b4! might be an improvement but after 14 ♙h4 White is still on top) 14 ♜fc1 h6 15 ♜xc6 hxg5 16 ♜xb6 cxb6 17 ♜xb6) 10 ♜d5 ♜xd5 11 exd5 ♜e5 (on 11...♜d8 12 ♙a3 d6 13 ♗b5+ is

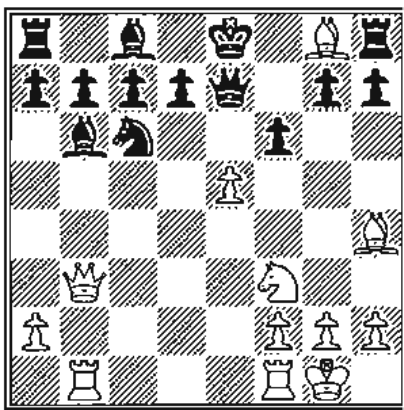
very good) 12 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 13 ♙b2 ♜g5 14 h4!



The queen runs out of decent squares and is deflected from its defence of g7.

14... ♜xh4 (or 14... ♜h6 15 ♜a3 intending ♜fe1+ is a winner) 15 ♙xg7 ♜g8 16 ♜fe1+ ♙d8 (16... ♙xe1 17 ♜xe1+) 17 ♜g3 1-0

9... f6 10 ♙xg8 c2 11 ♙h4 cxb1=♜ 12 ♜axb1 ♙b6 13 e5



White jumps at the chance to try to exploit his advantage in development by opening the e-file for the benefit of his rooks.

13... ♙f8

Of course, 13... ♖xe5 14 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 runs into 15 ♜fe1 and Black can go home.

14 exf6 gxf6 15 ♜fe1 ♜g7 16 ♙d5 ♖a5 17 ♜c3

The queen targets the weak pawn on f6 and Black's position collapses.

17... ♜g8 18 ♙xg8 ♙xg8 19 ♜e8+ ♙f7 20 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 21 ♜f8+ 1-0

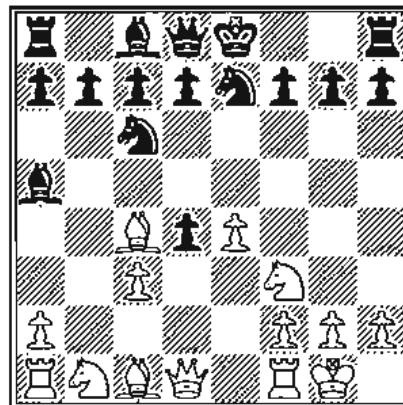
It is thought that 7... ♖ge7 is a sterner test and one which has to be taken seriously. The following heavyweight game by two world class grandmasters is worth noting:

Morozevich – Adams
Wijk aan Zee 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♖c6 3 ♖f3 ♙c5 4 b4 ♙xb4 5 c3 ♙a5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0

7 ♜b3 is seen in the next main game.

7... ♖ge7!



A critical line for Black. It requires stout defence but a well prepared player should survive the onslaught. Of course, Black is a player who is in the top ten of the world so one expects a higher level of play than at the local club!

8 g5

A direct assault in the spirit of the Evans Gambit. The alternative 8 cxd4, to build a pawn centre, is rudely interrupted by 8...d5. For example: 9 exd5 dxd5 10 ♖b3 (10 ♔a3 is a ploy to try to stop Black from castling when 10...♔e6 11 ♔b5 ♔b4 makes sense to reduce the influence of White's dark-squared bishop. 12 ♖a4 ♖d6 and the chances are level) 10...♔e6! Black should try the most dangerous line by offering the b-pawn as bait:

a) 11 ♔a3 ♔b4 12 ♔xb4 dxc4 13 a3 (13 dxc3 0-0 14 dxd5 dxd5 15 ♖xb7 ♖d6 is equal) 13...dxc6 14 ♖xb7 dxa5 15 ♔b5+ ♖f8 16 ♖a6 dxb3 17 ♖a2 dxb6 18 ♔e2 dxd4 19 ♖d2 dxe2+ 20 ♖xe2 ♖f6 with a level position.

b) 11 ♖xb7 ddb4 12 d5? (12 ♔b5 has been suggested but the evidence supports Black. For instance: 12...♔d5! 13 dxe5! ♖b8 14 ♔xc6+ dxc6 15 ♖a6 ♖b6 16 ♖d3 0-0 gave Black the brighter prospects in Schroeder-Harding, corr 1988) 12...♖b8 13 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 14 dxe6 fxe6 when White has inadequate compensation for the queen, Sulskis-Svidler, Moscow 2001.

8...d5

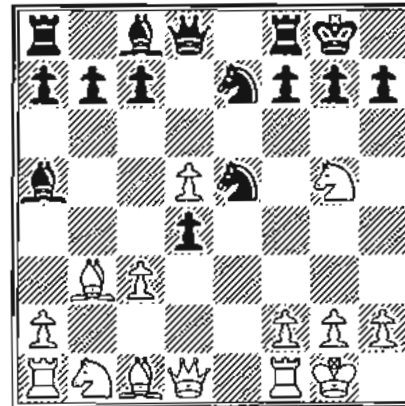
Instead 8...0-0? is punished by 9 ♖h5! when the dual threats against h7 and f7 are decisive. 9...h6 10 dxf7 ♖xf7 11 ♔xf7+ ♖h7 12 cxd4 ♔b6 13 ♔b2 dxd4 14 dxc3 with a winning advantage.

9 exd5

9 ♔xd5? is just a mistake because of 9...dxd5 10 ♖h5 (10 exd5 ♖xd5 11 ♖e1+ ♔e6 and Black has a couple of extra pawns) 10...g6 11 ♖h6 ♔e6 with a clear advantage, Estrin-Kondali, corr 1971.

9...dxe5 10 ♔b3 0-0

After 10...dxc3!? White needs to act quickly with 11 ♖e2 to exert immediate pressure when 11...f6 12 ♖d1! ♔g4! (or 12...c2 13 ♔xc2 dxd5 14 ♔b2 c6 15 ♔xe5 fxe5 16 ♖h5+ g6 17 ♔xg6+ with a great position) 13 f3 ♔f5 14 dxe6! ♔xe6 15 dxe6 ♖c8 16 ♔a3 c6 17 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 18 f4 is much better for White.

**11 cxd4**

Morozevich restores the material level. I think White can play natural attacking games with the Evans Gambit but it certainly helps to know some critical lines. A key idea is the piece sacrifice 11 dxc3 which exposes the black king. For example: 11...♖xh7 12 ♖h5+ ♖g8 13 ♖xe5 and now:

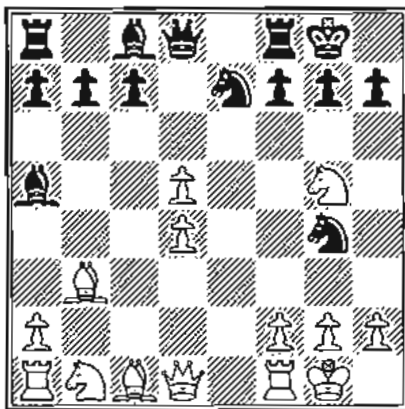
a) 13...dxc3 14 dxc3 (14 ♔a3 dxc3 15 ♖h5 dxf4! 16 ♖f3? ♖f6 17 ♔xf8 dxc3+ 18 ♖h1 ♖xf3 19 gxf3 ♖xf8 20 dxa3 ♔b4 is better for

Black) 14...♙xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♘xd5 16 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 17 ♙b2 f6 18 ♖xc7 with a slight initiative.

b) 13...♘f5 14 ♙d2 c5! (Black prepares to bring his bishop back to c7 in order to hassle the white queen) 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 ♖e1 ♙c7 17 ♖e4 ♖f6 18 ♙f3 ½-½ Short-Adams, Sarajevo 2000.

11...♘g4

In the game Vandendriessche-Froeyman, Belgian Team Championship, Black did not wait to see if there was an improvement in this line. There followed 11...♘5g6 and now White decided to go for it with 12 h4? which merely weakened his kingside: 12...h6 13 h5 hxg5 14 ♙xg5? (14 hxg6 ♘xg6 15 ♖f3 ♙b4 is better for Black) 14...♘h8 15 h6 ♖d6 with a winning advantage.



12 ♖f3

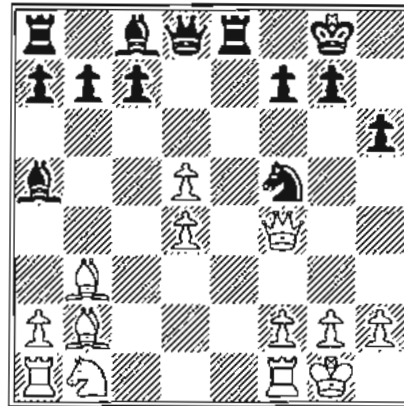
The obvious pin with 12 ♙a3 allows the surprising 12...♘xd5! when the line 13 ♙xf8 ♖xg5 shows that Black is happy to sacrifice the exchange because his active pieces are sufficient compensation. For instance: 14 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 15 ♙a3

♙d7 16 ♘d2 ♖xd4 17 ♘f3 ♖xd1 18 ♖fxd1 ♙c6 19 ♖ac1 ♖e8 when Black has slightly the better chances.

12...♘f6!? 13 ♙a3 h6 14 ♘e4

If 14 ♖e2 then 14...♘fxd5 15 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 16 ♙xf8 ♖xg5 gives up the exchange in return for attacking chances. For instance: 17 ♙c5? ♙h3! 18 ♖f3 ♘f4 winning.

14...♘xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖e8 16 ♙b2 ♘f5 17 ♖f4



17...♙b4!

This is a classic defensive idea for Black who wants to get the bishop back into the action.

18 ♘a3 ♙d6

Black has a very comfortable position – the initial battle in the opening has been in his favour.

19 ♖d2 ♖h4

It is clear that the opening has gone wrong when it is Black who has all the attacking chances.

20 g3 ♖h3 21 ♘c4 b5! 22 ♘e5?!

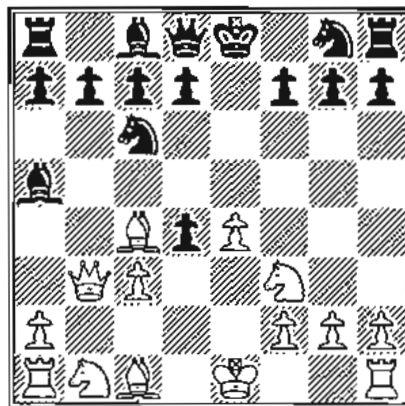
22 ♘xd6 is a better idea although 22...cxd6 23 ♖ael ♙d7 slightly favours Black because White's

doubled d-pawns block in his bishops.

22...♙b7 23 ♖ae1 a5! 24 a3 b4!
25 axb4?

This allows Adams to pounce with a combination based on a pin along the third rank.

25...♙xb4 26 ♙c3 ♙xc3 27 ♖xc3 ♘h4!

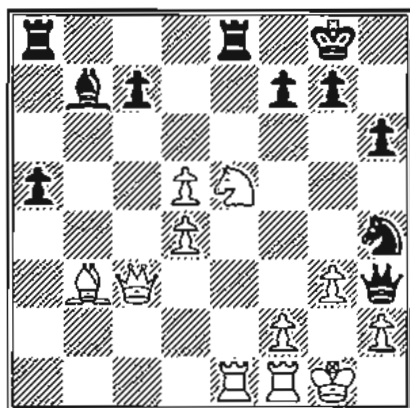


7...♚e7 8 0-0 ♙b6

A difficult move to find over the board but the 2003 Hastings winner is well prepared. 8...h6 is a natural reply to stop ♘g5 but it is too slow in the circumstances. In the game Laurent-Dauchy, Bethune 1999, continued 9 cxd4 d6? 10 d5 ♘d8 11 ♚a4+ ♙d7 12 ♚xa5 when Black played a few more moves in a vain attempt to stop the game being published as a miniature.

9 cxd4

9 ♙g5 is met by 9...♘f6 and Black should survive the attack.



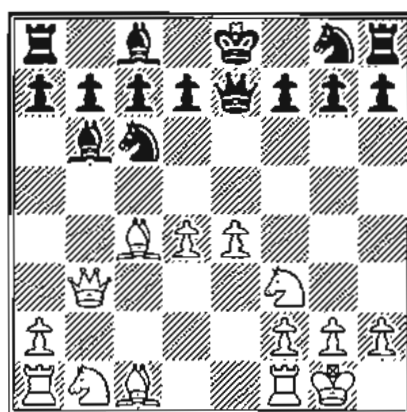
0-1

Another example demonstrates that the Evans Gambit is still a viable weapon at the highest level so long as White prefers 7 ♚b3.

Short – Nielsen
Skanderborg 2003

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♙c5 4 b4 ♙xb4 5 c3 ♙a5 6 d4 exd4 7 ♚b3

Short, the former world title contender, immediately presents Black with some problems by targeting the f7 pawn.



9...♘xd4

9...♘a5 has the merit of depriving White of the traditionally strong white-squared bishop but still incurs problems catching up on develop-

ment. For example: 10 ♖a4 ♟xc4 11 ♖xc4 d6 12 a4! c6 13 ♟c3 with sufficient compensation for the pawn, Sutovsky-Smagin, Essen 2001. It should be noted that 9...♟xd4?! allows White to dictate matters with 10 ♟xd4 ♟xd4 11 ♖d3! ♟e6 12 ♟a3 when he has all the fun.

10 ♟xd4 ♟xd4 11 ♟c3 ♟f6

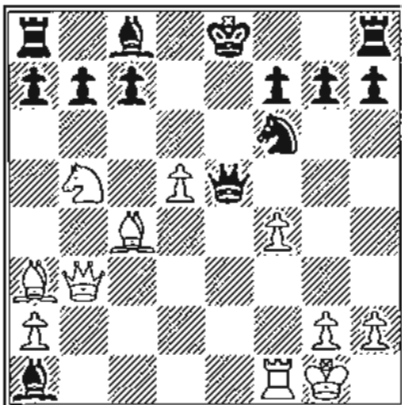
Although 11...c6? prevents the knight from occupying the d5 square it allows White to step up the onslaught by 12 ♜d1! ♟c5 13 ♟a4 d6 14 ♟xc5 dxc5 15 ♟xf7+! (Evans Gambit players expect to win in the opening) 15...♖xf7 16 ♜d8+ ♟e7 17 ♟g5+ ♟f6 18 ♜xh8 winning, Pflieger-Mendes, Lourenco Marques 1973.

12 ♟b5!

White sensibly maintains the momentum because otherwise Black will have time to castle and allow his king to escape the attack.

12 ♜d1 is also possible when 12...♟xc3 13 ♖xc3 d6? (13...0-0 is an improvement) 14 e5! dxe5 15 ♟a3 c5 16 ♟xc5! ♖xc5 17 ♟xf7+ winning.

12...d5! 13 exd5 ♟xa1 14 ♟a3 ♖e5 15 f4



I have to admit the position looks a complete mess but it does ensure a fun game. Anyway, if Short has faith in it against a top GM it will be fine at club level.

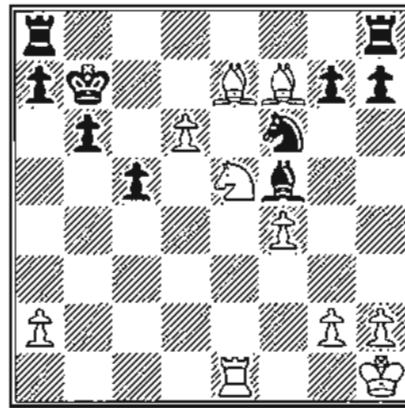
15...♟d4+ 16 ♟h1 ♖e3 17 ♟xd4 ♖xb3 18 ♜e1+ ♟d8 19 ♟e7+ ♟d7 20 ♟xb3 c6

Black should hesitate before playing 20...♜e8?? which looks obvious but Black would be rather embarrassed by 21 ♟c5 mate.

21 d6 b6 22 ♟xf7 c5

Nielsen is obliged to give the king an escape square. Instead, the casual move 22...♟a6 walks into 23 ♟e6+ ♟e8 24 ♟d4 ♟b7 25 ♟f5 and White wins.

23 ♟d2 ♟c6 24 ♟c4 ♟f5 25 ♟e5+ ♟b7



26 a4?

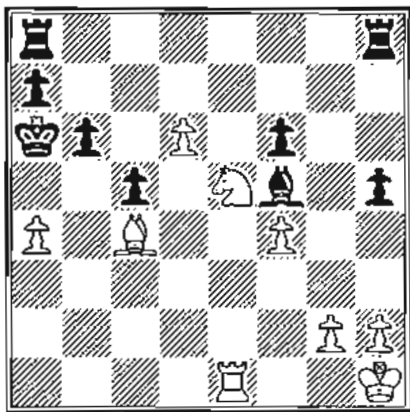
It is difficult to see, but 26 ♜e3 is a killer move because the threat of ♜g3 and ♜xg7 is very strong. Short is understandably distracted by the idea of advancing the a-pawn to weave a mating net.

26...h5 27 ♟xf6

White can no longer try to win by manoeuvring the rook because 27

♖e3 is met by 27...h4 which covers the important g3 square.

27...gxf6 28 ♙d5+ ♚a6 29 ♙c4+



29...♙b7

29...♙a5 seems like a dream come true but life is not like that! White wins with 30 ♖c6+ ♚xa4 31 ♖a1 mate. Actually, 29...b5 allows White to continue to fight on after 30 ♙xb5+ ♚a5 31 ♖c6+ ♙b6 32 ♖e7 with excellent chances.

30 ♙d5+ ♚a6 31 ♙c4+ ♙b7
1/2-1/2

A look in the old books will indicate that 5...♙e7 is the right answer and for decades this was the perceived wisdom. But this assumption was exploded when Garry Kasparov started to play the opening:

Kasparov – Anand
Riga 1995

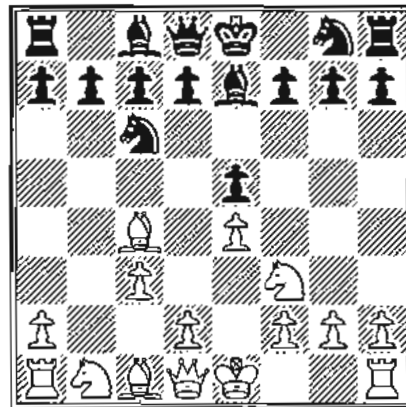
1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♖c6 3 ♖f3 ♙c5 4 b4

The original move-order was 1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 ♙c4 ♙c5 4 b4.

It is difficult to explain the amazement of the chess world when

a reigning world champion revived a line which had been neglected at elite level for decades. Of course, nowadays it is an accepted way of inviting complications in the opening.

4...♙xb4 5 c3 ♙e7



Anand adopts a solid approach where the idea is to fend off the attack and hang on to the extra pawn.

6 d4 ♖a5

6...exd4 is a bit slow, which is evident upon 7 ♖b3 ♖a5 8 ♙xf7+ ♙f8 9 ♖a4 ♙xf7 10 ♖xa5 d3? (10...d6 is necessary) 11 ♖d5+ ♙e8 12 ♖e5 1-0 Kuzmina-Melnikov, St Petersburg 2000.

7 ♙e2

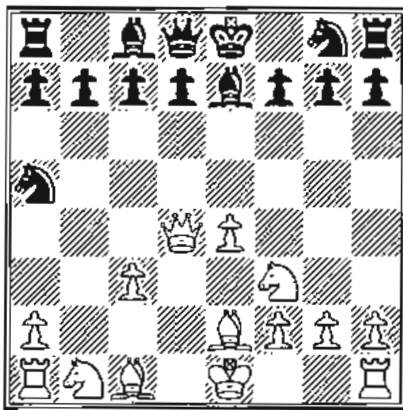
Kasparov's seal of approval for this retreat has made it the main continuation. In the past 7 ♙d3 and 7 ♖xe5 have been analysed with mixed results.

7...exd4

The suggestion 7...♖f6! is good for White after 8 dxe5 ♖xe4 and now 9 ♖a4 just wins a piece. It seems obvious but I have seen 9 ♖d5 recommended by one book so

you might catch someone out. A better bet is 7...d6 although 8 ♖a4+ exerts some pressure. For instance: 8...c6 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♜xe5 ♚c7?! (if 10...♞f6 then 11 0-0 with a slight edge) 11 ♙f4 ♙d6 12 ♞xf7! ♚xf7 13 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 14 ♚xa5 is decisive for White.

8 ♚xd4!



8...♞f6

The alternative 8...d6 is analysed in the next illustrative game. Black can also defend the g-pawn with 8...♚f8 or 8...f6 but White will just play 9 0-0 and rely on Black's cramped kingside as compensation for his pawn.

9 e5 ♞c6 10 ♚h4! ♞d5 11 ♚g3 g6

Anand compromises his kingside pawn structure but it is better than 11...0-0 which allows 12 ♙h6! g6 13 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 14 ♙c4 with the advantage.

12 0-0 ♞b6

If 12...0-0 White can chase the knight on d5 to put pressure on Black after 13 ♞d1 ♞b6 14 a4 ♞a5 (if Black stops the opponent's

advance with 14...a5 then 15 ♙e3, threatening to capture the knight and double the b-pawns, is good for White) 15 ♙h6 ♞e8 16 ♞bd2 when the initiative-seeking knight is heading for the e4 square.

13 c4

The c-pawn is advanced to make room for the queen's knight which will emerge on the c3 square. It is also worth considering 13 ♙h6!? d6 14 ♙b5 with a slight edge because Black's king is stuck in the centre of the board.

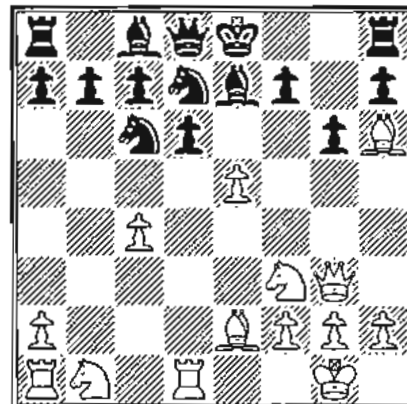
13...d6

Also possible is 13...0-0 14 ♙h6 ♞e8 15 ♞c3 d6 16 c5!? (16 ♞ad1 is worth considering so as to pin the d-pawn) 16...♞d7 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 exd6 ♙f6 19 ♞g5 led to attacking chances in the game Ponomariov-Daniliuk, Krasnodar 1997.

14 ♞d1 ♞d7

14...♙e6 allows White to exploit the pin on the d-file to good effect after 15 c5 ♞d5 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 ♙c4 dxe5 18 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 19 ♞c3 ♚a5 20 ♞xd5 with the better game.

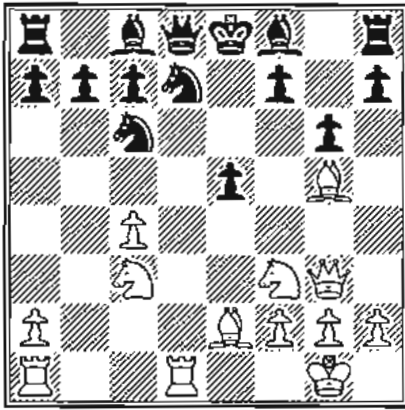
15 ♙h6!



A typical piece of inspiration from the world champion. He gives away another pawn in order to pursue the attack.

15...♖cxe5

If 15...dxe5 then Kasparov suggested 16 ♖c3 ♗f8 17 ♗g5 with a strong attack and the evidence supports his argument:



a) 17...♗e7 18 ♖d5 ♗xg5 19 ♖xg5 0-0 20 ♗h4 h5 21 ♗xh5! ♖g7 (21...gxf5 22 ♗xf5 with an easy victory) 22 ♗xg6 and Black can go home.

b) 17...f6 18 ♗e3 ♗g7 19 c5 0-0 20 ♗c4+ ♖h8 21 ♖h4 ♖e7 22 ♗e6 f5 (22...♗e8 23 ♖b5! attacking the c7 pawn causes problems for Black) 23 ♗g5 ♗e8? (Black is worse but this allows a pretty combination) 24 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 25 ♖xg6+ hxg6 26 ♗h3+ wins.

16 ♖xe5 ♖xe5

Or 16...dxe5 17 ♗g7 ♗h4 18 ♗f3 ♗g8 19 ♗xe5 and White has the superior chances.

17 ♖c3 f6

If 17...♗e6 then 18 ♗g7 ♗f6 19 ♗xh8 ♗xh8 20 c5 is in White's favour.

18 c5 ♖f7?!

Perhaps 18...♗e6 is the best chance when 19 cxd6 ♗xd6 20 ♖e4 maintains White's initiative.

19 cxd6 cxd6

The Black cause is not really helped by 19...♗xd6 in view of 20 ♗b5+ c6 21 ♗f4 cxb5 22 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 23 ♗xd6 ♗a5 24 ♗e1+ ♖f7 25 ♗xf6+! (White spots a mating combination) 25...♖xf6 26 ♖d5+ ♖g7 27 ♗e7+ ♖g8 28 ♗e5 and Black will soon be obliged to give up.

20 ♗e3 ♖xh6

A quiet move such as 20...♗d7 comes unstuck after 21 ♗g7 ♗g8 22 ♗xf6.

21 ♗xh6 ♗f8 22 ♗e3+ ♖f7

Black can try 22...♗e7 but White has no desire to trade queens when the attack is at its height so 23 ♖e4 should be preferred when 23...♗e5 24 ♖xf6+ ♖f7 25 ♖e4 ♗e7 26 f4 ♗f5? 27 ♗xd6 is winning.

23 ♖d5 ♗e6

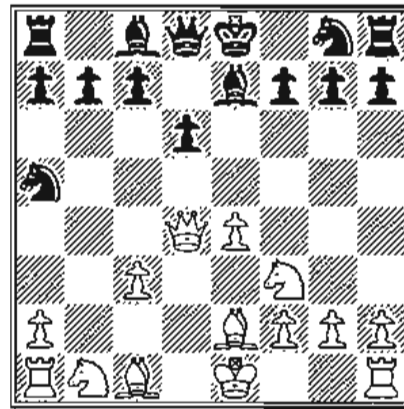
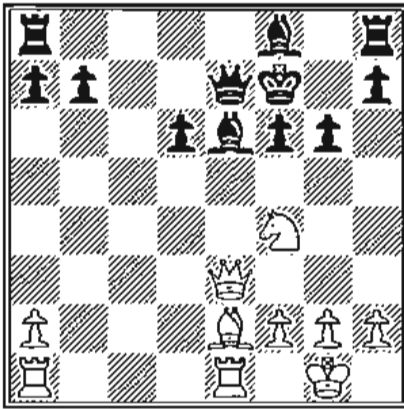
If 23...♗g7 then 24 ♗c4 maintains the onslaught against the black king when 24...♗e6 25 ♗b3 ♗e8 26 ♖f4 is good for White.

24 ♖f4 ♗e7

Or 24...♗d7 25 ♗b5! ♗xb5 26 ♗xe6+ ♖g7 27 ♗ab1 with a clear advantage.

25 ♗e1 1-0

It might seem that Black resigned prematurely but Black was sure Kasparov would see the following lines:



a) 25...Re8 26 Nxe6 Qxe6 27 Qxe6+ Kxe6 (or 27...Rxe6 28 Qc4 pins the rook) 28 Qb5+ winning easily.

b) 25...Qd7 26 Qc4+ Ke8 27 Qd2 winning.

c) 25...d5 26 Qf3 Re8 27 Nxe6 Qxe6 28 Qxe6+ Rxe6 29 Qxd5 winning;

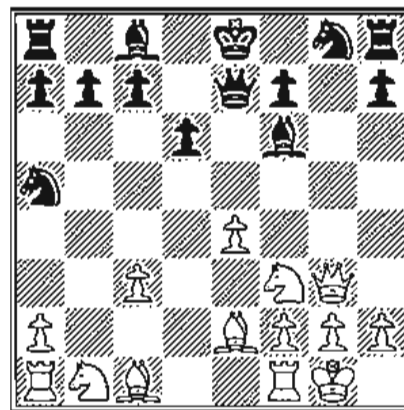
d) 25...Qd7 26 Qb5! Qxb5 27 Qxe6+ Kg7 28 Rab1 Qf5 29 Rxb7+ Kh6 30 Qe3 g5 31 Ne6 Rc8 32 h4 winning.

e) 25...Qh6 26 Qc4 winning. 26 Nxe6 Qxe6 27 Qxe6+ Kxe6 (27...Rxe6 28 Qc4 pins the rook) 28 Qb5+ winning easily.

Onischuk wants to ease the defence by handing back a pawn as a way to catch up on development. The drawback is that with an exposed kingside Black will have to seek shelter for his king by castling queenside.

9 Qxg7 Qf6 10 Qg3 Ne7

A big alternative is 10...Qe7!? when the main line is 11 0-0 and now:



In modern chess Kasparov's use of the opening has inspired numerous imitators. The maze of tactics appeals to Nigel Short.

Short – Onischuk
Beijing 2000

1 e4 e5 2 Qc4 Qc6 3 Nf3 Qc5 4 b4 Qxb4 5 c3 Qe7 6 d4 Qa5 7 Qe2 exd4 8 Qxd4 d6

11...Qd7?! 12 Nd4 0-0-0 13 Nd2 Qc6! 14 Qe3 h5 15 Rb1 Qh6 16 Qd3 (Or 16 Nxc6 Qxc6 17 Qxa7 Qe5 when Black is fine) 16...b6 17 a4 Qb8? (Black should make preparations to go for a walk with the king by playing 17...Rdg8. After 18 a5 Qxa5 19 Qa6+ Qd8 20 Qxa7 Qe8 21 Qb5 White has an edge but

it is not clear how he should proceed) 18 a5 ♖xa5 19 ♖a6 ♖a8?! 20 e5! with a strong attack, Shirov-Timman, Biel 1995.

b) 11...♖xe4!? 12 ♖e1 ♖f8 and now:

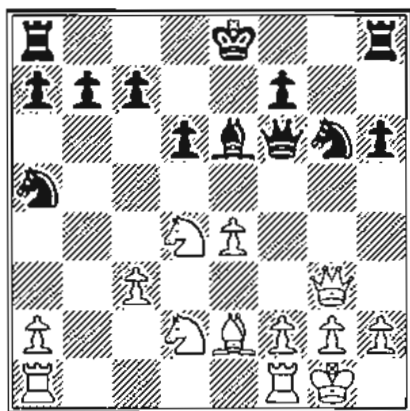
b1) 13 ♖b5 ♖g6 14 ♖e8+ ♖g7 15 ♖g5 ♖h6 16 ♖e4!? ♖xg5 17 ♖xg5 ♖f5 18 ♖h4 ♖xg5 19 ♖xg5 ♖g4 led to a slight edge in Shetty-Ravi, Kasaragod 1996.

b2) I prefer 13 ♖g5! when play might continue 13...♖g6 14 ♖d3 ♖f5 15 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 16 ♖f3 with compensation in the form of Black's misplaced king.

11 ♖g5 ♖g6 12 0-0 ♖e6

At first glance 12...♖xg5!? looks risky but then it seems reasonable after 13 ♖xg5 ♖f6 14 f4 h6!? (14...♖d7 15 ♖h5 0-0-0 16 ♖d2 with a level position) 15 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 16 ♖h5 and the pin in conjunction with the forthcoming f4-f5 will recover the piece) 16...♖g7 17 f5 ♖g5 18 ♖xg6! ♖xg3 19 hxg3 with roughly equal chances, Rajlich-Lukacs, Budapest 2000.

13 ♖bd2 h6 14 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15 ♖d4



The white knight is centralised in preparation for an advance of the f-pawn.

15...♖f4 16 ♖e3 ♖g5 17 g3 ♖h3+ 18 ♖h1 ♖xe3 19 fxe3

I think normally White would flinch at the thought of his pawns being doubled but he is relying on Black's poor piece coordination to generate an initiative.

19...♖e7 20 ♖ab1!? b6 21 e5?!

Short wants to dispose of the doubled e-pawn although 21 ♖f5+ is interesting with a sample line being 21...♖f8 22 ♖g2 ♖g5 23 h4 ♖h7 24 ♖bd1 with equal chances.

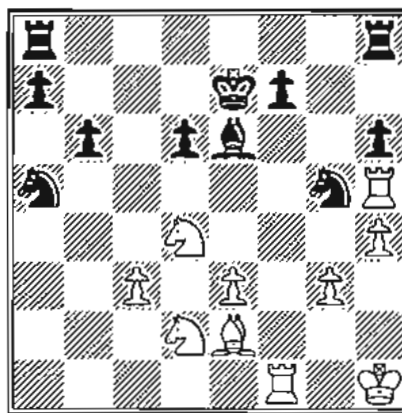
21...♖xa2!

White was expecting 21...dxe5 when 22 ♖xe6 fxe6 (22...♖xe6 23 ♖g4+ wins) 23 ♖f3! offers the better chances.

22 exd6+ cxd6 23 ♖b5 ♖e6 24 ♖h5

The obvious threat is to eliminate the defence of the knight by taking on e6. In the long-term it helps to apply pressure on the h6 pawn.

24...♖g5 25 h4



25...♖h7?

Black succumbs to the pressure and allows his pawn advantage to evaporate.

I think 25...♔h3 is a good option since 26 hxg5?! (26 ♖g1!? looks the best chance when 26...♘h7 27 ♖xh6 gives White some chances to go for the win) 26...♔xf1 27 ♔xf1 hxg5 28 ♖xh8 ♖xh8+ 29 ♔g1 gives Black decent practical chances.

26 ♖xh6 ♖ag8

An example of what dangers lurk in the ending is evident upon 26...♔h3? 27 ♖f4 ♖ag8 28 g4 when it is goodbye to the bishop, which is trapped.

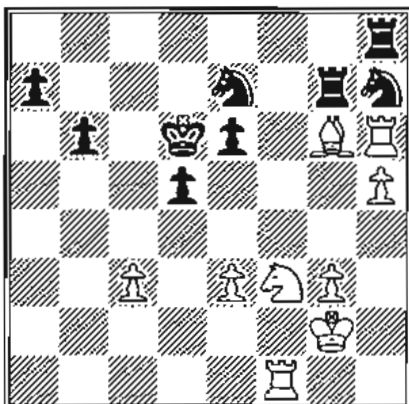
27 ♘xe6! fxe6 28 ♔h5 ♖g7

The rook covers the f7 square to stop ♖f7+. Instead 28...♘f8 is worse in view of 29 ♖f7+ ♔d8 30 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 31 ♔e2 ♘d7 32 ♔b5 and White is in charge of the ending.

29 ♔g6 ♘c6 30 ♘f3 d5

A scheme to quickly advance the queenside pawns starting with 30...a5? fails to impress after 31 ♔g2 b5 32 ♖b1 b4 33 cxb4 axb4 (or 33...♘xb4 34 h5 with an imminent victory because Black's pieces are tied up on the kingside) 34 h5 ♔f8 35 ♘g5 with a large advantage.

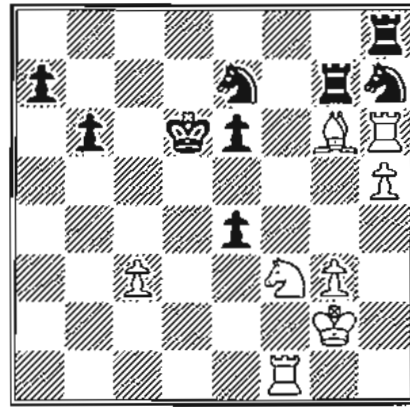
31 h5 ♔d6 32 ♔g2 ♘e7



33 e4?!

A direct approach with 33 ♘g5! is strong. For instance: 33...♘xg5 (or 33...♘xg6 34 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 35 ♘f7+ wins) 34 ♖xh8 ♘xg6 35 h6! ♖h7 (35...♖f7 allows 36 ♖g8! and Black will struggle) 36 ♖xh7 ♘xh7 37 ♖f7 ♘hf8 38 ♖xa7 with a winning advantage because White will advance the king to support the g and h pawns.

33...dxe4



34 ♔xe4?!

Short misses his chance to press home his advantage. 34 ♖d1+! is the key move: Then 34...♔c5 (34...♘d5 35 ♔xe4 or 34...♔c7 35 ♘d4 win for White) 35 ♔xe4 ♘g5 36 ♖xh8 ♘xe4 37 ♘d4 ♖xg3+ 38 ♔h2 and White has a large advantage.

34...♘g8 35 ♖g6 ♖xg6 36 ♔xg6 ♘h6 37 ♔h3 ♘f8 38 ♘h4 ♘d7 39 g4 ♖c8 40 g5 ♖xc3+ 41 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 42 ♘xf3 ♘g8

Onischuk prepares to sacrifice his knight for a pawn.

43 h6 ♘e7 44 ♔d3 ♘f8 45 h7 ♘xh7! 46 ♔xh7 a5

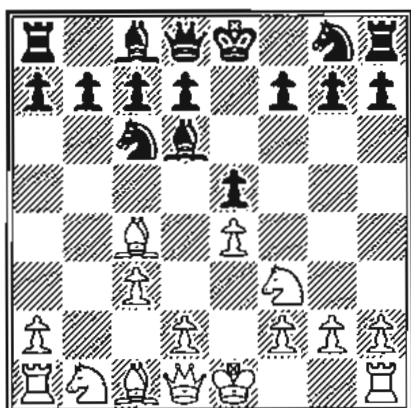
The a-pawn advances and it will cost White a piece to stop its progress.

47 ♖g4 a4 48 ♘d2 ♕d5 49 ♙b1
♕d4 50 ♙a2 ♖c3 51 ♘e4+ ♖b2 52
♙xe6 a3 1/2-1/2

If Black is looking for something a bit different he should take a closer look at a quirky line which has now become the latest fashion.

Short – Sokolov
Sarajevo 2004

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♙c5 4
b4 ♙xb4 5 c3 ♙d6!?



The first time I took any notice of this move was when it was played by Alexander Grischuk, the top Russian player in 2003. At first sight it looks terrible because it obstructs the d7-pawn and stops Black from developing his queen's bishop. However modern thinking is that Black will keep his extra pawn and still have time to castle kingside and play ...♖e8 and ...♙f8, after which the advance of the d-pawn will allow him to catch up on development. It is known in some

places as the Stoneware Defence in honour of the 19th century players Stone and Ware from Boston who played it regularly at a time when it was deeply unpopular. Moreover I have at least one reference to a game played in 1841 and a couple of successful outings by Pillsbury at Hastings 1895, although in those days the defence tended to be mishandled.

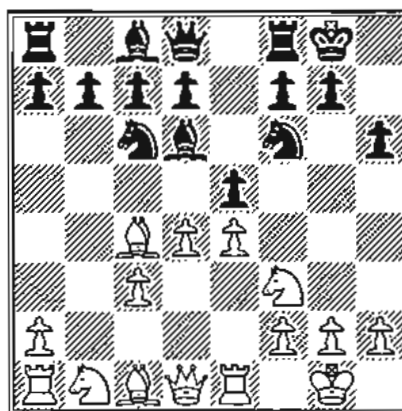
6 0-0

In the past the obvious move has been 6 d4 which is met by 6...♘f6 and now:

a) 7 dxe5 ♙xe5 (if 7...♘xe5? then 8 ♘xe5 ♙xe5 9 f4 ♘xe4 10 ♖h5 wins) 8 0-0 (or 8 ♘g5 d5! 9 exd5 ♘a5 10 ♖a4+ c6 11 dxc6 0-0 when the black king is safe and chances are roughly equal) 8...0-0 9 ♙d5 ♖e8 when I prefer Black who has an extra pawn and White's attack has fizzled out.

b) 7 ♘g5 0-0 8 f4! exf4 9 e5 ♘xe5!? 10 dxe5 ♙xe5 11 0-0 d5 12 ♙d3 h6 13 ♘f3 is very tricky and needs some practical tests because it is debatable whether Black has enough pawns for the piece.

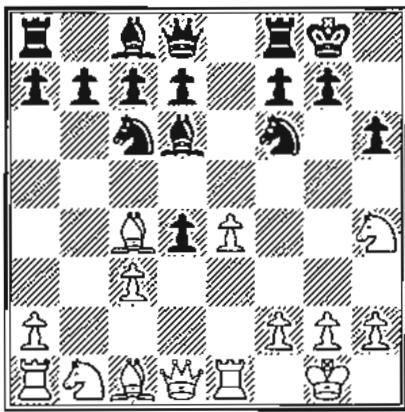
6...♘f6 7 d4 0-0 8 ♖e1 h6



It would be understandable but careless to play 8...♖e8? which allows White to gain time by 9 ♖g5 ♗f8 10 f4! with excellent chances.

9 ♖bd2

An obvious way to try to exploit the silly looking bishop on d6 is 9 ♖h4? but after 9...exd4 it is not clear what White should do to come out on top:



a) 10 cxd4 allows Black to seize the initiative with 10...♗b4! when 11 ♗d2 ♖xe4! 12 ♗xe4 (12 ♗xb4 ♖xb4 13 ♗xe4 d5 and Black has the upper hand) 12...d5 and Black will regain his material with the better position.

b) 10 ♖f5 ♗c5 11 cxd4 d5! 12 exd5 ♗xf5 13 dxc5 ♖a5 14 ♗b3 (in the circumstances 14 ♗f1 is the best chance although 14...♗xd5 15 ♗b2 ♗xd1 16 ♗xd1 ♗ad8 is a superior ending) 14...♖xb3 15 ♗xb3 ♗xd5 16 ♖c3 ♗fe8! gave Black the better prospects in Jobava-Grischuk, Plovdiv 2003. If White is looking for something unusual then I would suggest 9 ♗d5!? when a sample line is 9...♖xd5?! (9...♗e7 to support the e5 pawn is probably the best choice) 10 exd5 ♖e7 11 dxe5 ♗c5

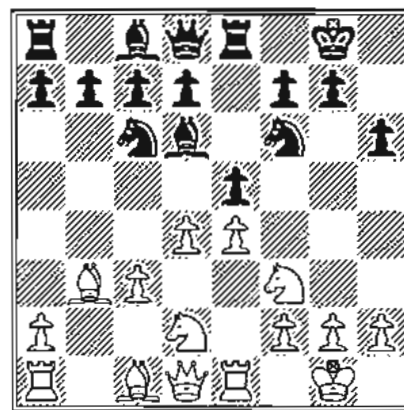
12 d6 ♖g6 13 ♗e3 with the better position.

9...♗e8

Instead 9...exd4 10 e5 ♖xe5 (10...dxc3 11 ♖b3! gives White the edge and is an improvement on the game) 11 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 d5 13 ♗d3 dxc3 14 ♖f3 when White's pieces will pose more problems than the clutch of pawns on the queen-side.

10 ♗b3

White retreats the bishop in order to allow the queen's knight to occupy the c4 square where it can increase the pressure on the e5 pawn or capture on d6. 10 ♗d3 is worth considering because at least it has the merit of stopping ...b5. For instance: 10...exd4 11 cxd4 ♗f8 12 d5! ♖b4 (or 12...♖e5?! 13 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 14 ♗b2 ♗e8 15 ♗c1 d6 16 ♗c2 with an edge) 13 ♗f1 ♖g4! 14 ♖b3 with a double-edged position.



10...b5

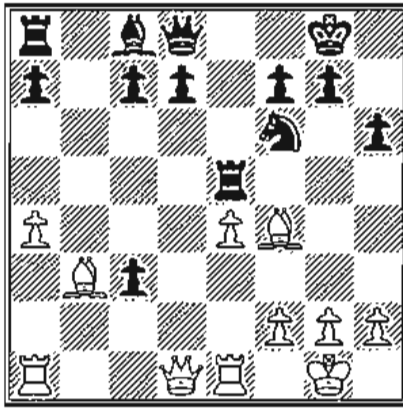
10...♗f8 has been tried before and it might be the best choice but practical experience with it has been negative: 11 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 12 dxe5 ♗xe5 13 ♖f3 ♗e7 (I think 13...♗xe4

14 ♔xf7+ ♕xf7 15 ♖xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♗d5+ is good for White because the black king is exposed but 14...♕h8 is about equal) 14 e5 with attacking chances, Sveshnikov-Zheliandinov, Bled 2000.

11 a4 b4 12 ♘c4

Now that the a-pawn has done its job of dislodging the b-pawn the queen's knight takes up its most influential post.

12...bxc3 13 dxe5 ♕xe5 14 ♘fxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 16 ♕f4



The opening has been a success for Short who has a lead in development, which will help to create tactical chances, and also a strong initiative. Black will have to try and shed his extra pawns at some point in order to fend off the onslaught.

16...♖e7

Sokolov has to be careful because 16...♖e8?! turns out to be a vital slip on 17 e5 ♘h7 18 ♔xf7+ ♕xf7 19 ♗d5+ ♕f8 20 ♗xa8 with a big advantage. The difference with having the rook on e7 is simply that the trick with the bishop does not work when ...♖xf7 is available.

Alternatively 16...♖xe4? is seen to be a blunder after 17 ♖xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♗d5 winning.

17 e5 ♘e8 18 ♗d3 d5 19 ♗xc3

It is understandable that White is keen to take back a pawn but a more precise continuation is probably 19 ♕c2! f5 20 ♗xc3 when the difference compared to the main game is that Black's light-squared bishop is restricted due to the f5 pawn.

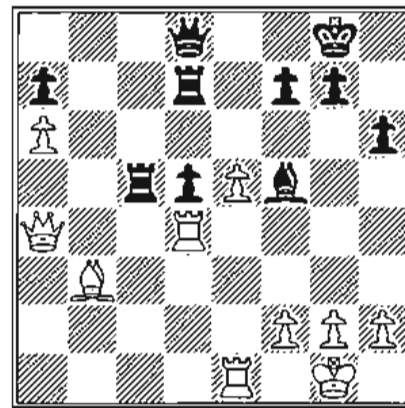
19...♕f5 20 ♖ad1 ♖d7 21 a5 c6

Now that the a-pawn has advanced Black is trying to simplify matters by spotting a chance to attack it.

22 ♗xc6 ♖c8 23 ♗a4 ♘c7

Black has given up his material advantage but in return has managed to quickly activate his pieces.

24 ♕e3 ♘e6 25 a6 ♘c5 26 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 27 ♖d4



The real battle is over and now White is obliged to try and salvage some winning chances by putting pressure on the isolated d-pawn.

The game concluded: 27...♖a5 28 ♗c6 ♗b6 29 ♗xb6 axb6 30 f4 ♖xa6 31 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 32 ♕xd5 The

ending is equal. 32...b5 33 ♖c1 ♗b6
 34 ♕f2 b4 35 ♘b3 g5 36 fxf5 hxg5
 37 ♖e3 ♘e6 38 ♗b1 ♘xb3 39
 ♗xb3 ♗b5 40 ♖d4 ♖g7 41 g4 ♖f8
 42 ♖c4 ♗xe5 43 ♗xb4 ♗e2 44 h3
 ♗e4+ 45 ♖c5 ♗e3 46 ♖d4 ♗xh3 47
 ♖e4 ♖g7 1/2-1/2

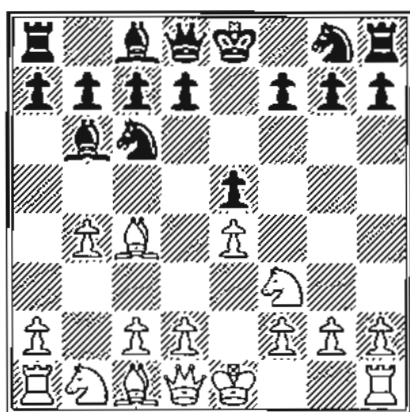
Conclusion

The Evans Gambit is still a viable option and particularly suited to fast time-limits. Therefore give away your pawns and win! I think if Black is greedy then he tends to be punished and the games between Soltysik-Davidovic and Rabiega-Haznedaroglu are striking examples of that. The move 5...♘a5 is a tough defence and has been known for some time as can be seen from the classic game Gunsberg-Steinitz. A modern example such as Kuipers-Sparenberg shows that Black has to

be wary. A much stronger line for Black is examined in Morozevich-Adams where White struggles to maintain the attack and is routed. As a consequence White should seriously consider 7 ♗b3 which is used to good effect in Short-Nielsen although White ultimately fails to spot the killer move to win. If anyone challenges you as to the soundness of the gambit then you can just point to the game Kasparov-Anand as proof that Black has plenty to fear. If you want to follow Kasparov's example then it is worth checking out Short-Onischuk which explores the same line. The stunning 5...♘d6 is well worth a try and not only to give Black players the satisfaction of shocking their opponents! The game Short-Sokolov is confirmation that it is not a joke opening but a line worthy of respect whether you are playing White or Black.

Evans Gambit Declined

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♜c6 3 ♝f3 ♙c5 4 b4 ♙b6



The only way to refute a gambit is to accept it! This pearl of wisdom is one of the reasons why in general Black is reluctant to decline the gambit by retreating the bishop. However it is a perfectly reasonable move and anyone who plays the Evans Gambit needs to know what to do against it.

White Wins

Perez – Gonzalez
Havana 1995

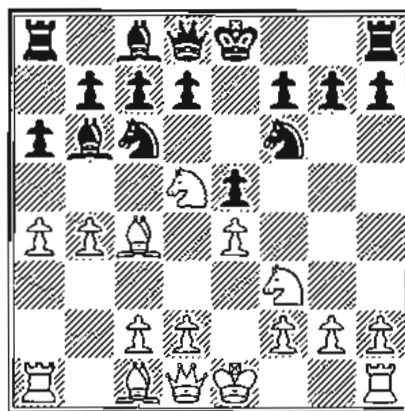
1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♜c6 3 ♝f3 ♙c5 4 b4 ♙b6

This is considered the best way to decline the gambit.

5 a4

The blunt approach because the threat is 6 a5 ♙d4 7 c3 trapping the bishop.

5...a6 6 ♜c3 ♝f6 7 ♜d5!?



The only move, which puts pressure on Black by threatening to double the b-pawns with a capture of the bishop. It was apparently first played by Kan in 1929.

7...♜xd5

7...♜xe4!?

gives White the impetus he needs after 8 0-0, for instance: 8...♜d6 (8...0-0 9 d3 ♜f6 10 ♙g5 d6 11 ♜d2 ♙g4? 12 ♙xf6 ♜c8 13 ♜xb6 cxb6 14 f3 when White has an extra piece, Kan-Botvinnik, Odessa 1929) 9 ♙b3 e4 10 d3 (10 ♙b2 exf3? 11 ♙xg7 ♜g8 12 ♜e1+ ♜e7 13 ♜f6 mate) 10...0-0 (10...exf3 is the critical test when 11 ♜e1+ ♜f8 12 ♜xb6 cxb6 13 ♜xf3 gives White some compensation) 11

♙g5 ♖e8 12 ♜f6+ gxf6 13 ♙xf6 h6 14 ♜g5 ♙d4 15 ♗h5 ♜f5 16 ♗g6+ 1-0 Harding - Feher Polgar, corr 1988.

8 exd5 e4

The alternative 8...♜d4 is considered in the next main game Smith-Brandhorst.

9 dxc6 exf3

If 9...0-0 White should prefer 10 0-0 exf3 11 ♗xf3, transposing to the game, rather than 10 ♜g1? when after 10...♗f6 Black is actually winning due to the threats against the pawn on f2 and the rook on a1.

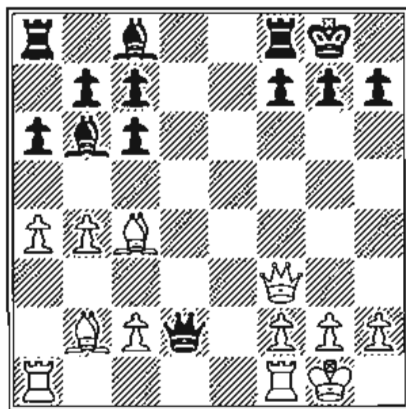
10 0-0

The tactics can be wild and White has lots of attacking options: 10 ♗xf3 ♗e7+ 11 ♙d1 dxc6 and now:

a) 12 ♙b2 is met by 12...♙e6! because 12...0-0? 13 ♗g3 g6 14 ♗c3 wins.

b) 12 ♖e1 ♙e6 13 ♙xe6 fxe6 14 ♗h5+ g6 15 ♗e5 0-0-0 is equal.

10...0-0 11 ♗xf3 dxc6 12 ♙b2 ♗xd2?!



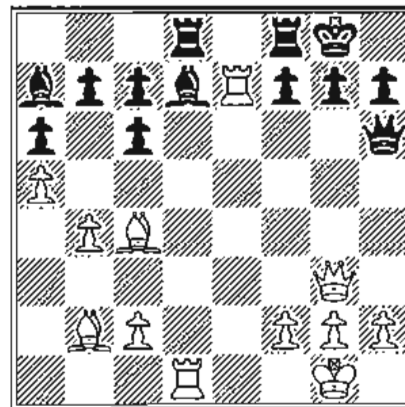
A brave decision – finding time to grab a pawn. It might be playable

but as always if Black is greedy in the Evans Gambit then he will need to defend accurately.

13 ♗g3 ♗h6 14 a5 ♙a7 15 ♖ae1 ♙d7

If the bishop is developed by 15...♙f5 it can be attacked with 16 ♖e5 when 16...♙xc2? allows the combination 17 ♖h5 ♗g6 18 ♖g5 winning.

16 ♖e7 ♖ad8 17 ♖d1



17...♙f5

It turns out this is a mistake due to a snap tactical chance. After careful analysis it emerges that the best choice is 17...♙e6 when 18 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 19 ♗d3! gives White an edge because the queen is immune to capture as 19...♖xd3 allows 20 ♖e8 mate.

18 ♙xf7+ ♙h8

Or 18...♖xf7 19 ♖xd8+ ♖f8 20 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 21 ♗xg7 mate.

19 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♙d5 1-0

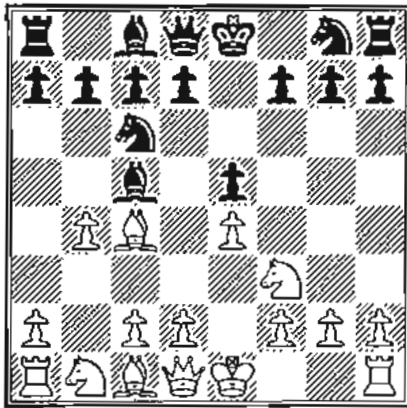
Black resigned but to be fair 20...♙d4 allows the struggle to continue when 21 ♙xd4 encourages the thunderbolt 21...♗c1 mate. Instead, 21 ♗xc7 maintains White's

advantage. However 20 ♖c4 is stronger because 20...♗d4 is useless due to 21 ♗xd4 ♖c1+ 22 ♗f1 when the bishop on d4 is taboo because of the threat of back rank mate.

The following game was played in the final of the USA correspondence championship. It was obvious that White had won in style when he received a message from his opponent: "I am embarrassed by this game. I don't want anyone to see it. Never had that feeling before." Well, after such a recommendation from the loser it would be a scandal not to analyse it!

Smith – Brandhorst
Correspondence 1999

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 ♗c6 3 ♗f3 ♗c5 4 b4



4...♗b6

There are a couple of alternatives that are occasionally seen:

a) 4...♗e7 is a passive response but White cannot refute it in the opening: 5 b5 This is not sufficient to win a pawn, which has been

known for some time. Perhaps 5 c3 ♗f6 6 d3 when White adopts the same approach as seen in the Closed Giuoco Piano by defending the e4 pawn and preparing to steer the battle into the middlegame. 6...0-0 7 ♖b3 h6 8 0-0 d6 9 ♗e3 ♗g4 10 ♗bd2 gives White the edge) 5...♗a5 6 ♗xe5 ♗xc4 7 ♗xc4 d5 8 exd5 ♖xd5 9 ♗e3 ♖xb5 10 ♗c3 ♖c6 with equal chances, Chigorin-Schiffers, Berlin 1897.

b) 4...d5!? is rarely played but White needs to be prepared for anything. 5 exd5 ♗xb4 6 0-0 (the idea of pinning the knight with 6 ♗a3 is better for Black after 6...e4! because 7 ♗g1?? allows 7...♖f6 threatening mate on f2 and the queen's rook on a1) 6...♗f6 7 ♗xe5 ♗bxd5 8 d4 ♗e7 (8...♗d6 9 ♗g5 c6 10 ♗d2 0-0 11 ♖f3 with an edge, Schiffers-Pillsbury, Nuremberg 1896) 9 ♗b3 0-0 10 c4 ♗b6 11 ♗b2 c6 12 ♗d2 with roughly equal chances, Felgaer-Pierrot, Buenos Aires 2000.

5 a4

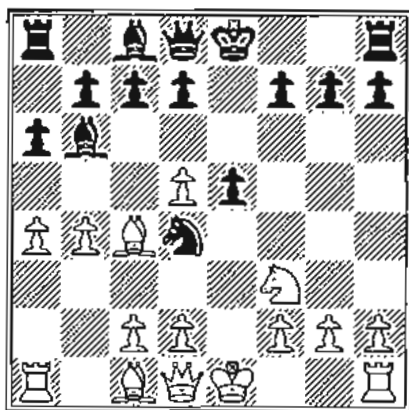
In the early days of this gambit 5 b5 was preferred when 5...♗a5 6 ♗xe5 (after 6 ♗e2 I think Black might even have the better prospects with 6...d5!) 6...♗h6!? 7 d4 d6 8 ♗xh6 gxh6! 9 ♗xf7 ♖f6 10 ♖h5 is possible (I tried to make 10 ♗xh8 work but 10...♗xd4 11 ♗f7+ ♖f8 12 ♖d2 ♗xa1 offers Black the superior chances).

5...a6

Black could be tempted to take the spare pawn with 5...♗xb4 but it leads to a favourable version of the

Evans Gambit Accepted after 6 a5
 ♖c5 7 c3 ♖c6 8 0-0 d6? 9 d4 cxd4
 10 cxd4 ♖b4 11 d5 ♖xa5 12 ♗a4+
 winning.

6 ♖c3 ♖f6 7 ♖d5 ♖xd5 8 exd5
 ♖d4



The centralising knight move has a good practical record. It is necessary to know what to do against 8...♖xb4!? because older references say it just loses a piece: 9 0-0! (9 c3?! seems to win the knight but the answer is 9...e4! when 10 cxb4 exf3 11 ♗xf3 0-0 12 0-0 ♗h4 gives Black an edge) 9...e4 10 ♖e1 0-0 11 ♖xe4 d6 12 c3 ♖c6 13 d4 (13 dxc6 d5 regains a piece for Black and offers roughly equal chances) 13...♖a5 14 ♖d3 when White has the superior piece placement compared to Black's misplaced queenside forces.

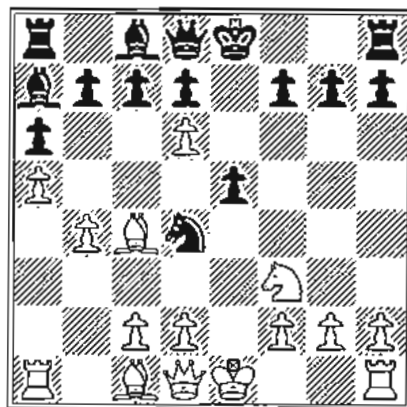
9 d6!?

An interesting development which has breathed life into the line after being neglected for decades. The idea caught the imagination of gambit players after it was played by Michael Casella in New York 1993 and has since been refined.

Also possible:

a) 9 ♖xd4? ♖xd4 10 c3 ♖xf2+ 11 ♖xf2 ♗h4+ 12 g3 ♗xc4 leaves White in big trouble.

b) 9 a5 ♖a7 10 d6 and now:



b1) when the recommendation in *Nunn's Chess Openings* is 10...♗f6 which is described as leading to an unclear position. 11 ♖a3?! (11 0-0 should be preferred and transposes to a similar position to the main game) 11...♗xd6 12 0-0 0-0 13 c3 ♖xf3+ 14 ♗xf3 ♗g6 15 ♖e1 ♖e8 16 d4 d5 17 ♖xd5 ♖g4 with the initiative, Niebergall-Korneev, Boeblinger 2003.

b2) 10...cxd6 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♖a3? (12 ♗f3! 0-0 13 c3 with an edge for White because Black will have problems developing his queenside) 12...♖xf2+! 13 ♖f1 (13 ♖xf2 ♗h4+ 14 g3 ♗xc4 wins) 13...♖h4 14 ♗h5 ♗e7 led to an advantage in Lopez-Benen, Lindsborg 2004.

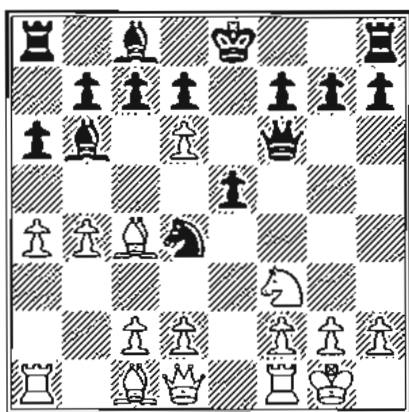
c) 9 ♖b2 ♖xf3+ 10 ♗xf3 d6 11 d4 ♗h4 12 g3 ♗h3 Lode-Mikhalevski, Paris 2000, and now instead of 13 ♖f1 as played in the game White could have gained a sizable advantage by 13 dxe5 when a sample line is 13...dxe5 14 a5 ♖a7

15 d6 0-0 16 dxc7 with the superior chances.

9... ♖f6

This is regarded as the most active move. Black is in for a long struggle after 9...cxd6 because it will be difficult to carry out a smooth development of the queenside with his entombed light-squared bishop.

10 0-0

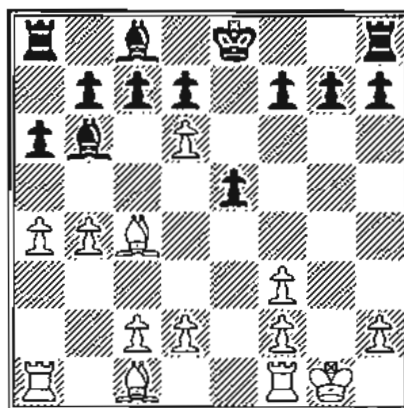


10... ♖xf3+?!

An instinctive move because it seems that White has gone wrong by allowing his f-pawns to be doubled. I think 10... ♖e6 is a better choice: 11 ♖b2 (11 d4!? e4 12 ♖d2 ♖xd4 13 ♖a3 ♖xd6 14 ♖g4 is a suggestion by Gutman who prefers White's attack) 11...cxd6 12 d4 e4 13 ♖d2 ♖g6 14 ♖xe6 (I prefer 14 ♖a3!? intending to swing the rook across to the kingside to hassle the black queen. 14...0-0? 15 ♖g3 ♖h6 16 d5 ♖d4 17 a5 ♖a7 18 ♖xe4 and Black can go home) 14...dxe6 15 ♖c4 ♖c7 16 d5 0-0 when Black has fended off the attack and has an extra pawn, Casella-Almasi, New York 1993. As usual 10...cxd6 is frowned upon because doubling the d-pawns means that the bishop on

c8 will have difficulty joining in the game. 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 c3 ♖a7 13 d4 (the pawn is advanced to open lines of attack) 13...exd4 14 ♖e1+ ♖f8 15 ♖a2! when the threat of 16 ♖ae2 is very good for White. I have failed to find any reference to 10... ♖xd6!? but White needs to know what to do and I suggest 11 a5 ♖a7 and now 12 ♖xe5! 0-0 (12... ♖xe5? 13 ♖e1 pins the queen) 13 ♖e1 ♖xb4? 14 ♖a3 wins.

11 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 12 gxf3



12...a5?!

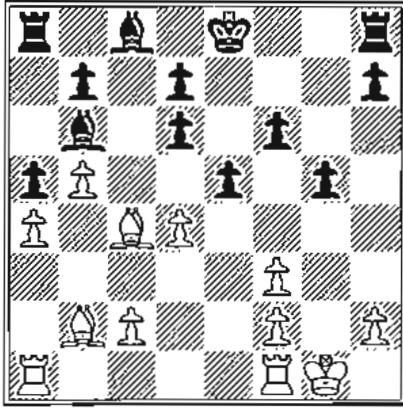
12...cxd6 is the obvious reply but even in the ending the lack of queenside development will prove critical. White can choose to continue with 13 c3, recommended by grandmaster Chandler, or try 13 ♖b2 with similar play to the main game.

13 b5 cxd6 14 ♖b2 g5

An odd looking move but the idea is to stop White ridding himself of the doubled f-pawns with f3-f4. For example: 14...0-0 15 f4 exf4 16 ♖ae1! gives White the better chances because Black can barely move any pieces. Or 14...d5 15 ♖xd5 d6 16 f4 f6 17 fxe5 dxe5 18

d4 exd4 19 ♖fe1+ ♔d8 20 ♖ad1
with an initiative.

15 d4 f6



One argument is that Black is a pawn up and will eventually exploit this advantage in the ending. The problem with this view is that if he fails to activate his queen's rook and light-squared bishop then he is effectively two pieces down.

16 ♖fe1 h5 17 ♖ad1

The queen's rook is centralised in preparation for a more active role.

17 d5 is possible, to try to close the position but 17...♙c5!, intending ...b6, ...♙b7, when at last the queen's rook can join in the action and give Black the advantage.

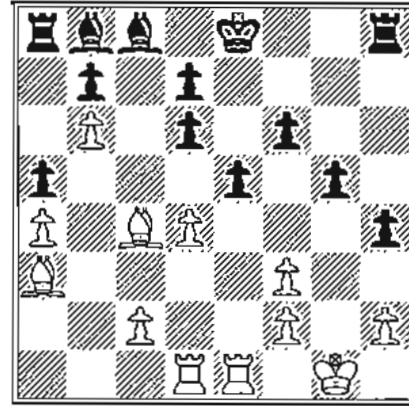
17...h4 18 ♙a3!

After watching Black reveal his limited capacity to pose problems by merely advancing pawns, White spots a way to up the pressure.

18...♙c7

Of course, 18...♙xd4 reveals the point of White's previous move because of 19 ♖xd4 winning easily.

19 b6 ♙b8



This is an amusing position for White and a tragedy for Black. Smith is now effectively playing with a couple of extra pieces and a breakthrough on the kingside is merely a matter of time. Instead 19...♙xb6 is no better after 20 ♙xd6 ♔d8 21 dxe5 with a clear advantage.

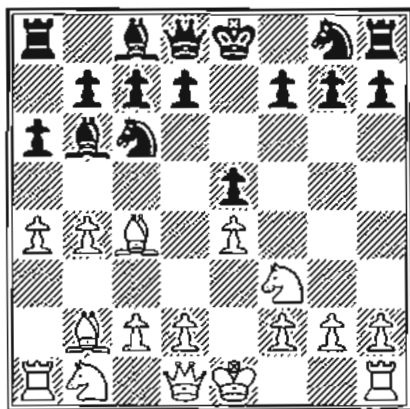
20 d5 ♔d8 21 f4! 1-0

It seems premature to resign but White will open a file for a heavy piece invasion and Black has no chance with effectively only a rook to defend the kingside against all of White's forces.

There is room for improvement for Black, as mentioned in the notes to the previous lines – so White has investigated other plans. The following games involve a queen-side fianchetto to put pressure on the e5 pawn and steer the game towards a middlegame battle after rapidly completing his development.

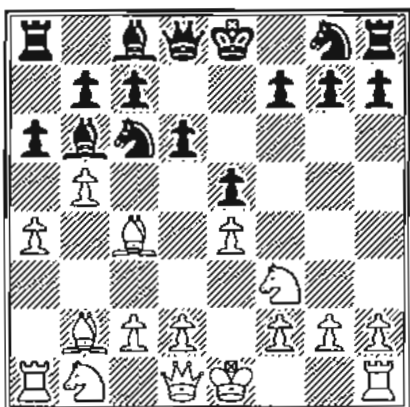
Sveshnikov – Yashtylov
St Petersburg 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♙c5 4
b4 ♙b6 5 a4 a6 6 ♙b2



The queenside fianchetto is a sound continuation, which was all the rage about 100 years ago! However, Sveshnikov is an experienced grandmaster so he obviously feels that White can make progress with this.

6...d6 7 b5

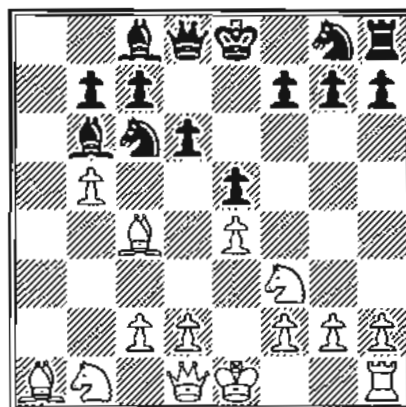


7...axb5

Black can also avoid the exchange of the queen's rooks with 7...♭a5 8 ♖e2 ♘f6 9 d3 (White protects the e-pawn which looks tame but he will try to exert more pressure in the middlegame after developing his pieces) 9...c6 10 ♘a3 0-0 11 0-0 ♘g4 12 d4 f5 (this advance is always tempting but White's pieces are well placed to cope with such

aggression) 13 exf5 e4 14 ♘d2 ♘f6 15 f3 ♖xf5 16 fxe4 ♖xe4 17 ♖xf6! ♗xf6 18 ♘xe4 gave White the advantage in G.Lee-Westwood, 4NCL British Team Championship 2003.

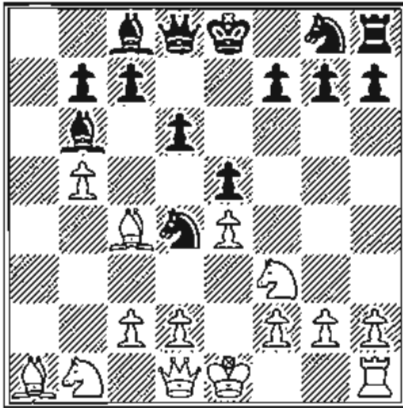
8 axb5 ♖xa1 9 ♖xa1



9...♘a5

This move used to have a poor reputation because if Black plays casually the knight can become marooned on the edge of the board. The old move 9...♘b8 is designed as a way to manoeuvre the queen's knight back into the action via the d7 square. 10 d4 exd4 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘f6 (an old analysis by Tartakower concludes that after 12...♗f6! 13 e5! dxe5 14 ♘xe5 ♖e6 15 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 16 0-0 ♘f6 17 ♖e1 0-0 18 ♘d3 ♗c8 White is better) 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♘c3 with slightly better prospects due to the lead in development, Tartakower-Yates, Karlsbad 1929.

The main alternative is 9...♘d4 so it is worth examining it in some detail:



a) 10 exd4 exd4 11 0-0 f6 12 d3 0-0 13 c3 (13 bd2 d5! 14 exd5 exd5 is equal) 13... dxc3 14 dxc3 e6 15 xe6 fxe6 16 a4 led to equal chances in Carleton-Homer, Staffordshire 1971.

b) 10 exd4 exd4 11 0-0 f6 12 f3 0-0 13 c3 g4 (if 13... dxc3 14 xc3 then White has some pressure on the c3-h8 diagonal) 14 f4 e6 15 xe6 fxe6 16 cxd4 a8 17 c3 ½-½ as in Chandler-Keitlinghaus, German Team Championship 1996.

10 e2

White retreats the bishop and hopes to prove that the knight on the edge of the board is a long-term liability. In a previous game Sveshnikov tried 10 a2 to maintain the pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal against Georgiev, Elista 1998, with an encouraging victory. That game went: 10... f6 11 c3 0-0 12 0-0 c6 13 d4 exd4 14 xd4 e8 15 d3 with an edge.

10... f6 11 c3 0-0 12 0-0 g4 13 d3 d7 14 d2

The position is level but Black still needs to bring the queen's knight into the action soon, possibly with ... c7-c6 .

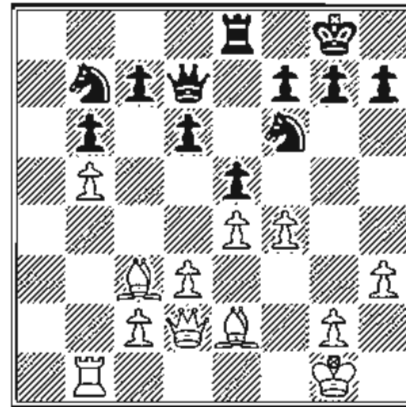
14... c5 15 h3 xf3 16 xf3 b6

Black finds a route for his queen's knight, preparing to transfer it towards the centre with a future ... c5-b7 .

17 b1 d4 18 d5 xd5 19 xd4 f6

If 19... exd4 then 20 exd5 leaves the pawn on d4 vulnerable.

20 c3 b7 21 e2 e8 22 f4!



A pair of bishops can best be exploited on a clear board so White starts to probe for favourable openings.

22... c5 23 a1 e7 24 e3 e8 25 g3

The queen is well placed on g3 to add its weight against the e5 pawn.

25... cd7 26 fxe5 dxe5 27 b2 f8 28 c1 g6 29 h4!

It is never easy to fling the pawns in front of the king forward but here White has no fear of any swift retaliation. Therefore preventing Black from placing his pieces on decent squares is a priority.

29... d7 30 h5 f8 31 g5

The pin on the knight is awkward for Black because White is well

placed to engineer attacking chances on the kingside by undermining the defence of the knight on f6 with ♖f1 or h5-h6.

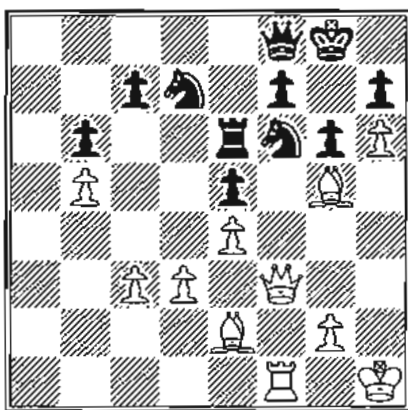
31... ♖d6 32 ♔h1 ♖e8 33 ♖f1 ♖e6

It would appear that Yashtylov can relieve the pressure by moving the knight backwards but then White can target the weak f7 pawn with 33... ♘d7 34 ♗f2 which is difficult to resist: e.g. 34... ♗e6 35 ♙g4! ♗a2 (35... ♗xg4 36 ♗xf7+ wins) 36 h6 g6 37 ♗f3, intending c2-c4, is winning.

34 c3 ♘d7 35 h6 g6 36 ♗f3

White is maintaining the momentum by adding the queen to the f-file. The point is that the knight on f6 cannot move otherwise the f7 pawn will fall, thus leaving Black's pieces more and more cramped.

36... ♗f8



37 ♙d1!

Now the white-squared bishop joins in the attack by preparing to manoeuvre to the b3-g8 diagonal.

37... ♖d6 38 ♙b3 ♗e7 39 ♔g1 ♗e8 40 d4 ♗e7

Black has not much choice but to wait and see because 40... exd4 41 cxd4 causes problems due to the threat of e4-e5 while 41... ♗xe4 42 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 43 ♙xf7+ ♔h8 44 ♖a1! leads to mate.

41 ♙d5 ♗f8 42 ♙b3 c6?! 43 ♗h3 ♗e7 44 bxc6 ♖xc6 45 ♙a4

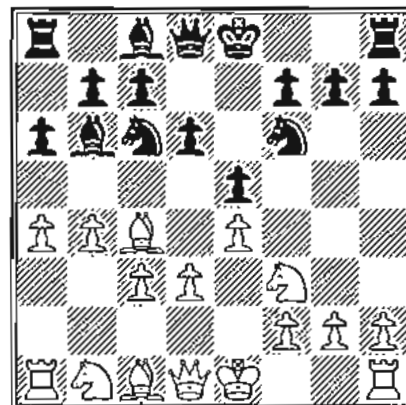
The end is nigh. If the rook moves then 46 ♙xd7 wins a piece because if Black recaptures then the knight on f6 will be left with only one defender and will be taken.

45... ♗d6 46 ♙xc6 ♗xc6 47 ♙xf6 1-0

It is also possible to handle the position in the style of the Closed Giuoco Piano:

Short – Zhang Zhong
Beijing 2003

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♙c5 4 b4 ♙b6 5 a4 a6 6 c3 ♘f6 7 d3 d6

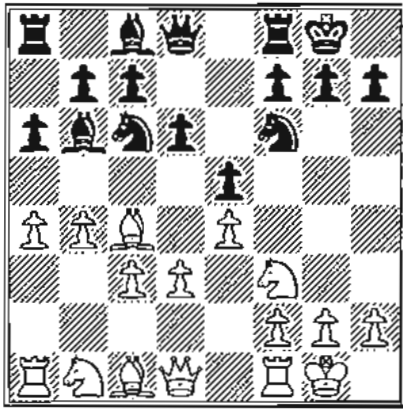


This position is recognised as closed Italian Game but is appropriate here because it is a main alternative. Therefore, rather than direct you elsewhere to a different

move-order I think it makes sense to examine it in this chapter.

8 0-0 0-0

Black also has time to eliminate the prospect of ♙g5 or ♜g5 by the simple $8...h6$. The top level encounter Glek-Yermolinsky, Wijk aan Zee 1997, continued: 9 ♜bd2 $0-0$ 10 ♙b3 ♞e7 11 ♞c4 ♙a7 12 ♙e3 ♙e6 13 ♙xa7 ♞xa7 14 ♞e1 ♞g6 15 d4 with roughly equal chances.



9 ♜bd2

Short is content to gradually develop his pieces before finding the right moment to play $d3-d4$. In these lines, with pawns advanced on the queenside, the knight often goes to $c4$ in order to try and keep a grip on Black's position. Alternatively, I have tried set-ups with $h2-h3$ followed by ♞e1 , ♞d2-f1-g3 and obtained reasonable chances. There are various choices for White:

a) 9 ♙e3 allows Black to equalise after $9...♙xe3$ 10 fxe3 $d5!$ when Yermolinsky-Anand, Madrid 1998, continued 11 exd5 ♞xd5 12 ♞d2 ♙e6 13 ♞a3 ♞e7 14 e4 ♞b6 with equal chances.

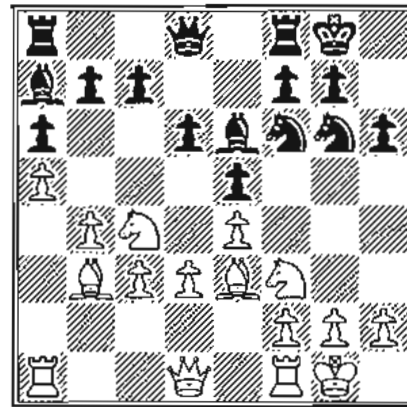
b) 9 ♙g5 $h6$ 10 ♙h4 $g5$ 11 ♙g3 ♙g4 12 h3 ♙h5 13 ♞bd2 ♞h8 14 ♙b3 with a slight edge, Yudasin-Sherzer, Washington 2002.

c) 9 h3 $h6$ 10 ♙e3 ♙xe3 11 fxe3 (the semi-open f-file is a boost to possible attacking options) $11...♞e8$ 12 ♞bd2 $b6$ 13 d4 exd4 14 exd4 ♞xe4? Black is greedy and grabs the pawn. 15 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 16 ♙d5 $1-0$ Veselovsky-Miskovec, Slovakian Team Championship 2000.

9...♞e7 10 a5

White has to be careful because even in such a solid position a move like 10 ♞e1 can allow Black to generate an initiative by $10...♞g4!?$ 11 ♞e2 ♞h8 12 h3 ♞h6 intending $...f7-f5$ with double-edged play..

10...♙a7 11 ♙b3 ♞g6 12 ♞c4 h6 13 ♙e3 ♙e6



The Chinese grandmaster is seeking piece exchanges to ease the tension.

14 ♙xa7 ♞xa7 15 ♞e1 ♞a8 16 d4!?

Now is the right time to create a pawn centre.

16...♞xe4

If 16...exd4 then 17 ♖xd4 (17 cxd4 allows 17...d5 18 exd5 ♖xd5 with a level game) 17...♙xc4 18 ♙xc4 d5?! 19 exd5 ♖xd5 20 ♖f3 c6 21 ♗f5 with the advantage.

17 ♙xe4 d5 18 ♙xe5 dxc4 19 ♙xe6!

A nice idea. White gives up the exchange in return for long-term pressure.

19...fxe6

19...cxb3?! is met by 20 ♙e3 ♖d5 21 ♙b1 and Black will lose a pawn.

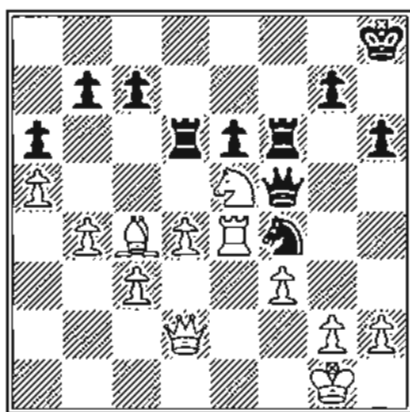
20 ♙xc4 ♖f6 21 ♖c2 ♙h8?!

Though not yet obvious, having the king on h8 will lead to tactical problems later in the game. So 21...♗f4 is necessary when 22 ♖e4 gives White a slight edge.

22 ♙e1 ♗f4 23 ♗e5 ♖f5 24 ♙e4

Short wants to keep the queens on in order to have more tactical chances.

24...♙f6 25 f3 ♙d8 26 ♖d2 ♙d6?



Even grandmasters make mistakes! Instead 26...♙g8 should be considered when 27 ♗d3 maintains White's advantage

because of the pressure on the e6 pawn.

27 ♖xf4!

The start of a neat combination, which decides the game.

27...♖xf4 28 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 29 ♗g6+ ♙h7 30 ♗xf4

With two pieces against the rook it is no contest because the black pawns will soon drop off the board.

30...♙c6 31 ♙d3+ ♙g8 32 ♙e4 1-0

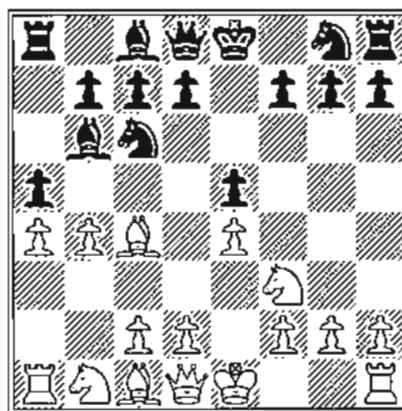
The final question is what to do when Black plays 5...a5 to stop White from gaining space on the queenside? The answer is to look at how a chess legend handles the position:

Kasparov – Piket
Amsterdam 1995

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♗c6 3 ♗f3 ♙c5 4 b4

The original move-order was 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♙c4 ♙c5 4 b4.

4...♙b6 5 a4 a5?!



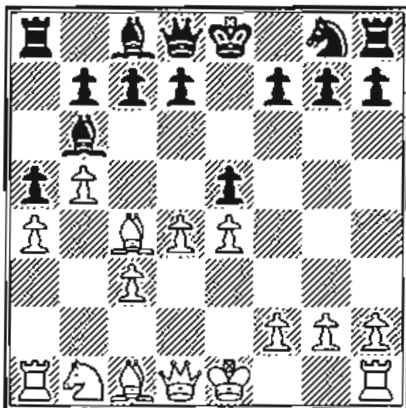
The Dutchman decides to put a stop to White's bid for more space on the queenside.

6 b5 d4 7 dxd4

A lesser player might fall for the ancient trick 7 dxe5? when Black wins in style with 7...Wg5! 8 dxf7 Wxg2 9 f1 Wxe4+ 10 e2 d3 mate.

7...exd4 8 c3 e6 9 d4

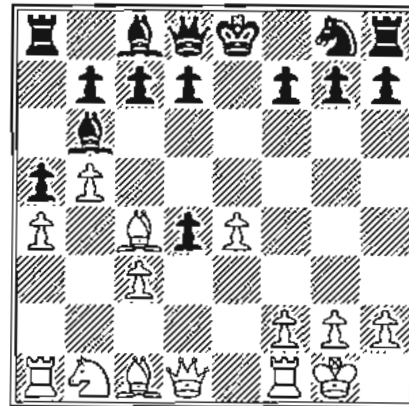
The line with 5...a5 has been in a shadow ever since Paul Keres recommended this line decades ago as giving White the advantage.



9...exd4

It might be better for Black to try and hold the position with 9...Wg7 10 0-0 d6 (10...d6 11 e1 d6 12 a3 with a slight edge) 11 f4 e6 12 a3 exd4 13 cxd4 0-0-0 14 e2 (I propose that White should try the aggressive pawn advance 14 f5 when play might continue 14...xc4 15 dxc4 Wxe4 16 f4 We7 17 g4 g6 18 g5 d6 19 dxb6+ cxb6 20 c1+ b8 21 g3 and the pin on the knight gives White the advantage) 14...d6 15 f3 led to equal chances in Nunn-Hecht, Buenos Aires 1978.

10 0-0

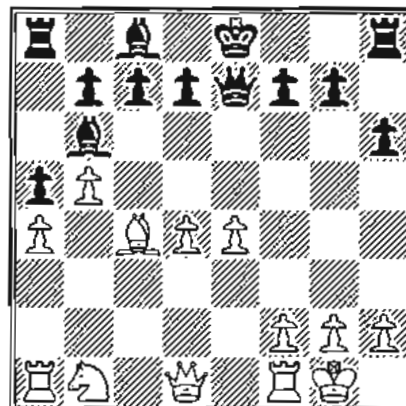


This is in keeping with Kasparov's aggressive style of play. The standard move 10 cxd4 allows Black to try 10...d5! which used to be regarded as equalising but perhaps things are not so clear after 11 exd5 d6 12 c3! (an improvement on the known line 12 g5 when 12...h6 13 xf6 Wxf6 is roughly equal) 12...0-0 13 0-0 g4 14 d2 giving White the better prospects due to the extra pawn.

10...d7

If 10...dxc3 then 11 dxc3 d7 12 g5 and White has tremendous play due to his lead in development.

11 g5 h6 12 xe7 Wxe7 13 cxd4



13...Wd6?!

Piket is busy chasing pawns when he really should be concentrating on getting the rest of his pieces into the action. Other tries:

a) 13...0-0 14 ♖c3 c6 15 ♜b1 ♙c7 16 ♚d3 when I prefer White who is ahead in development.

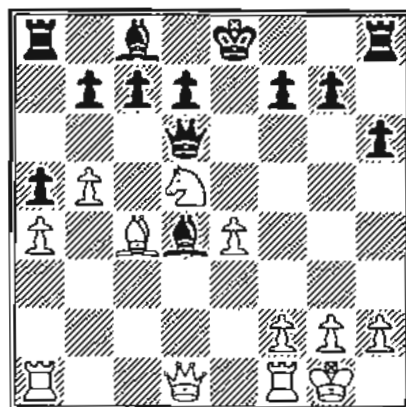
b) 13...d6 14 ♖c3 ♙e6 15 ♖d5 ♙xd5 16 ♙xd5 (the dominant bishop will keep Black on guard) 16...♜b8 17 ♚d3 0-0 18 ♜ac1 with a space advantage.

c) 13...♚b4!? is a suggestion by Kasparov when play might continue 14 ♚d3! d5 15 exd5 0-0 16 ♖c3 g6 intending ...♙f5 to activate the queenside but White still has the edge thanks to his extra pawn.

14 ♖c3 ♙xd4

Kasparov in his notes gave the wonderfully imaginative line 14... ♚xd4 15 ♖d5! ♚xc4 (15...♚xd1 16 ♜fxd1 is good for White who will take on b6 and then put a rook on d6) 16 ♜c1 ♚a2 17 ♖xb6 (I prefer 17 ♜xc7! ♙xc7 18 ♖xc7+ ♙d8 19 ♖xa8 winning) 17...cxb6 18 ♚d6 ♚e6 19 e5 ♚xd6 (19...h5 intending 20...♜h6 looks a sterner test but I suspect Kasparov was too wrapped up in demonstrating a pretty finale) 20 exd6 ♙d8 21 ♜fe1 ♜e8 22 ♜xe8+ ♙xe8 23 f4 and now White is actually winning this remarkable position because the queenside pieces can never emerge! A simple plan would be for White to advance his kingside pawns when the white king and rook will combine to win a black pawn and score an easy victory.

15 ♖d5!



A touch of class. White offers the sacrifice of the exchange in return for a strong attack.

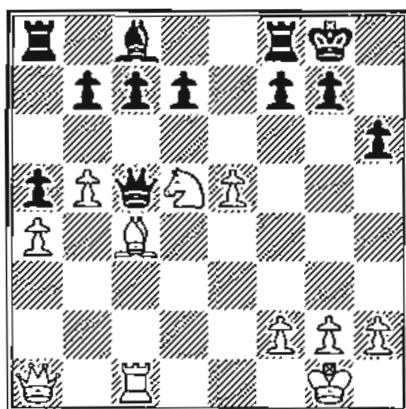
15... ♙xa1

After the game a number of masters tried to revive the line but the improvement 15...c5!? comes under pressure from 16 bxc6 when Black is struggling after 16...dxc6 (16...♙xa1 17 ♚xa1 0-0 18 c7 is better for White) 17 ♚xd4 cxd5 18 ♚xg7 ♜f8 19 ♜ad1 winning.

16 ♚xa1 0-0

Black should try 16...f6 when 17 b6! cxb6 18 e5 (18 ♜b1 looks a better bet) 18...fxe5 19 ♜e1 ♙d8 20 ♜xe5 is an analysis by Kasparov giving White a slight plus.

17 e5 ♚c5 18 ♜c1!



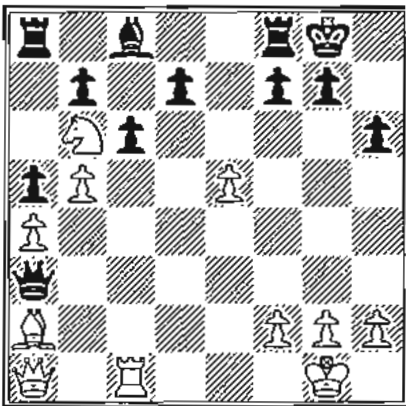
18...c6

If 18...d6 then 19 ♖b3 gives White tremendous play upon 19...♗a7 20 ♜xc7 dxe5 21 ♗xe5 ♙g4 22 ♘e7+ ♚h8 23 ♘g6+! ♙g8 24 ♘xf8 ♜xf8 25 ♜xf7 and White wins.

19 ♙a2 ♗a3

19...♗a7 was presumably rejected on the grounds that the audience would start giggling after 20 b6 ♗b8 21 ♘c7 ♜a6 22 ♗d4 when the black queen looks rather sad.

20 ♘b6



20...d5

The natural 20...♜b8 is hit by 21 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 22 ♗xa3 and Black can give up.

21 ♘xa8

White is now a piece up.

21...♙h8 22 ♘b6 ♙e6 23 h3 ♜d8 24 bxc6 bxc6 25 ♜c3

Not 25 ♜xc6? which gives Black some play upon 25...d4 26 ♜c2 d3 27 ♜d2 ♜b8 when White still has work to do to achieve victory.

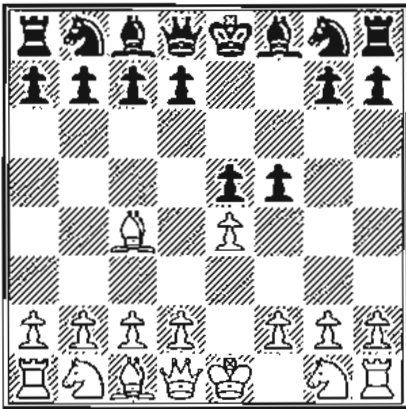
25...♗b4 26 ♜xc6 ♜b8 27 ♘xd5 ♗xa4 28 ♜c1 ♗a3 29 ♙c4 1-0

Conclusion

The idea of 6 ♘c3 and 7 ♘d5 is shown to be a sharp idea in Perez-Gonzalez and Smith-Brandhorst. It works well but 10...♘e6 is an improvement in the Smith game so it is worth checking out the alternatives. The game Sveshnikov-Yashtylov sees another approach with a queenside fianchetto. A level position is reached but White accurately increases the pressure to win the middlegame battle. A closed Giuoco Piano is another way to deal with Black's refusal to accept the gambit pawn. It certainly worked well in Short-Zhang Zhong, which is a model example of how White should handle the position. If Black wants to restrict White's queenside ambitions then 5...a5 is a natural response. However, Kasparov-Piket reveals that White has tremendous attacking chances against 5...a5 and wins with flair.

Unusual Replies

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 f5



There are plenty of players who wish to avoid the main lines and play something a little bit different. This can catch White out if he is not prepared but usually there is a good reason why Black's reply is unusual. The answer is that White can punish wild opening strategies and score an easy victory.

History

All the weird looking moves have been mentioned or played by someone with a good chess pedigree. 2...f5 is known as the Calabrese Counter Gambit, so called in honour of the seventeenth century master Greco. The reckless 2...b5 is labelled the Reversed Evans Gambit but might be more properly named

Anderssen's Attack after the only strong player who tested it. I think the best of the bunch is 2...c6 which can lead to positions similar to Paulsen's Defence.

Black wins

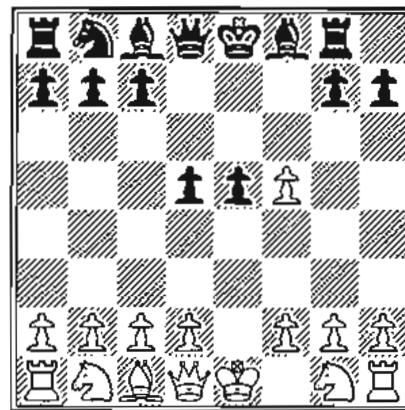
Fisher – Steinitz
London 1872

1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 f5!? 3 ♗xg8?!

White is going for a refutation of the opening.

3 d3 is discussed in the next illustrative game.

3...♖xg8 4 exf5



Instead 4 ♖h5+ g6 5 ♖xh7 ♖g7 offers Black excellent counterplay for the pawn and has been known since 1620 when Greco published

some analysis: 6 ♖h8 (6 ♖h6 d5 7 d3 dxe4 8 dxe4 f4 led to roughly equal chances in Ermel-Schunk, Seefeld 2001) 6...♗g5 7 ♖h3 fxe4 8 ♘c3 ♗f5 9 ♗e3 ♙f7 10 ♘h3 d5!? 11 ♘xd5 ♘c6 12 c3? ♙e6 13 c4 ♘d4 14 ♗c3 ♗g4 15 0-0 ♘e2+ winning easily.

4...d5

Black has created a pawn centre and just needs another move to take back on f5.

5 ♖h5+ g6 6 fxc6

6 ♖xh7 ♙g7 is similar to the note to White's fourth move.

6...♙xg6! 7 ♘e2

7 ♖xe5+?? is laughable after 7...♙e6 when the queen is pinned. Meanwhile 7 ♖xh7 should be met by 7...♗f6 when 8 g3 ♙c5 gives Black sufficient compensation for the pawn due to his lead in development which ensures a strong attack.

7...♘c6 8 0-0 ♙g4! 9 ♖xh7 ♙h6 10 ♗d3

Fisher is obliged to defend the knight on e2 which allows Black to gain time by chasing the queen.

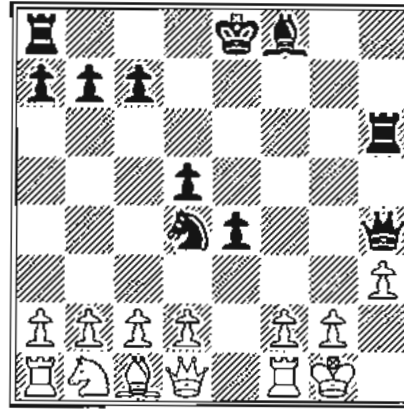
10...e4 11 ♗e3 ♖h4

The reason why having your pieces activated is clear from this position where Black has a terrific attack.

12 h3

Or 12 ♗g3 to stop the mate threat but 12...♙xe2 wins a piece.

12...♙xe2 13 ♗xe2 ♘d4 14 ♗d1



White's moves are being dictated by the first world champion because 14 ♗g4 ♗xg4 15 hxg4 allows 15...♘e2 mate.

14...♘f3+! 15 ♖h1

If 15 gxf3 then ♖xh3 leads to mate.

15...♗xh3+!?

This game was played in an era where, from a modern viewpoint, everything was played with one eye on the brilliancy prize. A simpler solution is 15...♗g4! threatening ...♙xh3+.

16 gxh3 ♙xh3+ 17 ♖g2 ♙h2+ 18 ♖g3

The king is going for a walk and checkmate is imminent.

18...♙d6+ 19 ♖g4 ♙h4+ 20 ♖f5 ♙h5+ 21 ♖g6

In any case there is no escape for White's king, but an alternative pretty finish is 21 ♖f6 ♙e5+ 22 ♖g6 ♙g5+ 23 ♖h7 0-0-0 24 ♗xf3 ♙h8 mate.

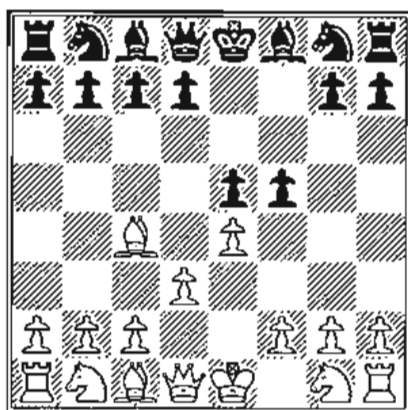
There is no escape:

21...♙g5+ 22 ♖h6 ♙f8+ 23 ♖h7 ♖f7 24 ♙h1 ♙g7 0-1

A more measured response is needed to prevent Black creating such strong kingside play:

Fryer – Lyell
Hastings 2003/4

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 f5 3 d3

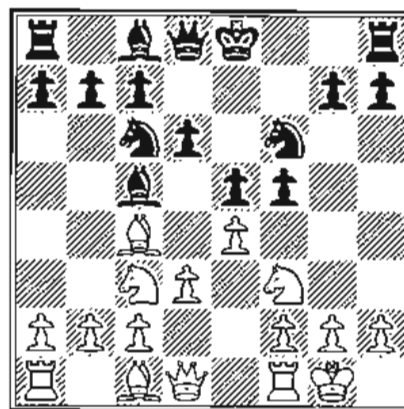


This modest decision to defend the e4 pawn is generally accepted as the best reply. The idea is that White prevents Black from easily playing ...d7-d5 by maintaining the pawn on e4 which has such great influence on the central squares.

3... ♗c6

Also possible is 3... ♗f6 4 f4 (perhaps 4 ♗c3!? is needed before advancing the f-pawn) 4... ♗c6 5 ♗f3 fxe4 6 dxe4 ♗xe4 7 fxe5 (7 ♖d5 ♗f6 8 ♖xc6 e4 9 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 10 ♖e3 with equal chances, Bowden-Lyell, Southampton 1986) 7... ♗xe5 8 ♖d5 ♗xf3+ 9 ♗xf3 ♗f6 left Black with an extra pawn and the better chances, Emms-Lyell, Southampton 1986.

4 ♗f3 ♖c5 5 0-0 d6 6 ♗c3 ♗f6



7 ♖g5

Fryer chooses to pin the king's knight. The debate on the best course of action is still going on:

a) 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 ♖f7+ ♗f8 9 ♗d5 ♗xd5 10 ♖xd5 f4 11 ♗h5 (11 ♗f7!? ♖g8 12 c3 ♖e6?! 13 ♗g5 offers White the better chances) 11...g6 12 ♗h6+ ♗g7 13 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 14 c3 led to equal chances in Yeo-Lyell, British Team Championships 1999;

b) 7 exf5 ♖xf5 8 ♖e1 ♖g4 (a casual move such as 8...a6 runs into 9 d4 ♖xd4? 10 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 11 ♗xd4 and White wins) 9 ♗a4 ♖b6 10 ♗xb6 axb6 11 c3 with equality, Handley-Lyell, Edinburgh 1989.

7... ♗a5

Black is keen to exchange the light-squared bishop so that he can castle kingside.

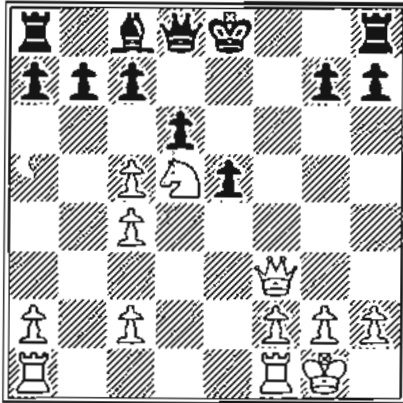
8 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 9 ♗d5

I have analysed 9 b4 but Black can survive by 9... ♗xc4 (9... ♖xb4 10 ♗d5 ♗d8 11 ♗xb4 is good for White) 10 bxc5 ♗a5 11 cxd6 cxd6 12 ♗d5 ♗d8 13 ♗h4 0-0 14 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 15 exf5 ♖xf5 16 ♗g4 ♖f7 with roughly equal chances.

9...♖d8 10 b4

White encourages the exchange of pieces to highlight Black's backward development.

10...♗xc4 11 bxc5 fxe4 12 dxc4 exf3 13 ♖xf3



White has a slight plus because his pieces are better placed than Black.

13...c6

It is too slow to try 13...dxc5 when 14 ♖ae1 ♖d6 15 ♖h5+ ♔f8 16 ♖xe5 is decisive for White.

14 ♗c3 ♖f6 15 ♗e4 ♖xf3 16 ♗xd6+ ♔e7 17 gxf3

Fryer has tripled c-pawns which may look ugly but crucially they cover important squares and manage to support a knight on d6 which is very influential.

17...h5 18 ♖fe1 ♔f6 19 ♖ad1 ♔e6 20 h4 b6 21 ♗e4+ ♔e7 22 ♗g5

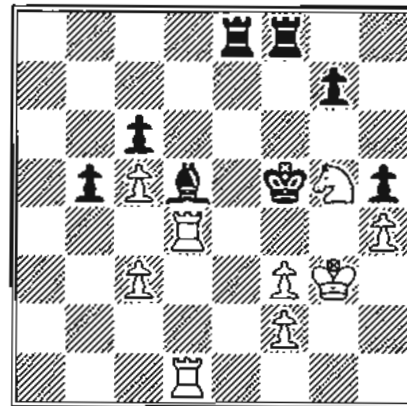
I prefer 22 f4! which sets Black a fresh batch of problems: 22...♗xc4 (22...exf4? just loses a piece after the combination 23 ♗g5 ♖h6 24 ♖d6) 23 ♗d6 ♔xa2 24 ♖xe5+ (It

can never be good for the black king to be forced to take a walk) 24...♔f6 25 ♗e4+ ♔g6 26 f5+ ♔h7 27 ♗g5+ ♔g8 28 ♖a1 ♔c4 29 ♖xa7! when Black can resign with honour.

22...♗xc4 23 ♖xe5+ ♔f6 24 ♖e4?!

A slight inaccuracy which allows Black to curtail the attack. 24 f4 is a better idea to keep the e4 square free for the knight.

24...♔d5 25 ♖f4+ ♔e5 26 ♖a4 b5 27 ♖ad4 ♖hf8 28 c3 ♖ae8 29 a4 a6 30 axb5 axb5 31 ♔g2 ♔f5 32 ♔g3



The position is level but Black has finally reached the point where he can actually play something aggressive.

32...♖e2??

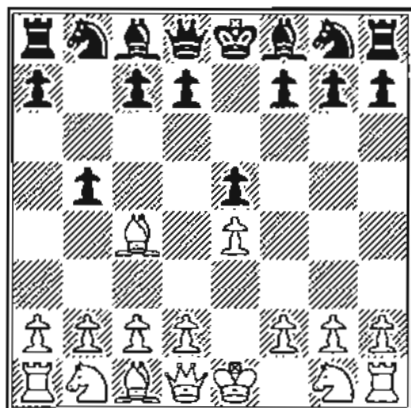
Oops!

33 ♖f4+ 1-0

The next game features the amusing 2...b5, which is revived every now and then but should be a joy for White:

Voigt – Sell
German Team Championship 1991

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c4 b5?



An amusing position. Though this sort of opening was all the rage in 1860s its prospects would be regarded as bleak in the modern era. The reason for this being that defensive techniques have improved greatly and Black will just end up being a pawn down for not much.

3 ♗xb5 f5

It makes more sense to try to enter a Reversed Evans Gambit by 3...c6 4 ♗c4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♗c5 when Black can attempt to justify his bizarre opening choice.

4 d4!

White seeks to open the position in a bid a to try to exploit Black's exposed king pawn cover.

4...exd4

If 4...fxe4 Black can put the pieces back into the box after 5 ♖h5+ g6 6 ♖xe5+.

5 exf5 ♘f6 6 ♘f3 c5 7 0-0

White has developed smoothly but Black has had to worry about defending the d-pawn.

7...♗e7 8 b4 cxb4 9 ♘xd4 0-0 10 ♗b2

I think 10 a3 is also good because 10...bxa3 11 ♗xa3 secures a space advantage.

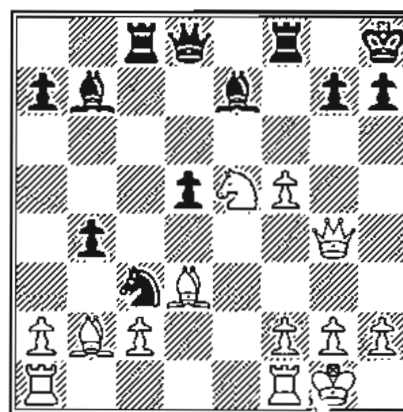
10...♗b7 11 ♗c4+ ♖h8 12 ♘d2 ♘c6 13 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 14 ♘f3

White can also think about introducing the king's rook into the game with 14 ♖e1, thereby maintaining a slight edge.

14...♖c8 15 ♘e5 d5 16 ♗d3 ♗b7 17 ♖f3

Voigt is seeking attacking options by transferring the queen to the kingside.

17...♘e4 18 ♖g4 ♘c3?



19 ♖h3

White is being careful but the time is ripe to accelerate the onslaught with 19 ♘g6+! when 19...hxg6 20 fxg6 ♗g5 (or 20...♖e8 21 ♖h5+ ♖g8 22 ♖h7+ ♖f8 23 ♖h8 mate) 21 ♗c1 ♗xc1 22 ♖fxc1 ♖e8 23 ♖h5+ ♖g8 24 ♖h7+ ♖f8 25 ♖e1 gives White a winning advantage.

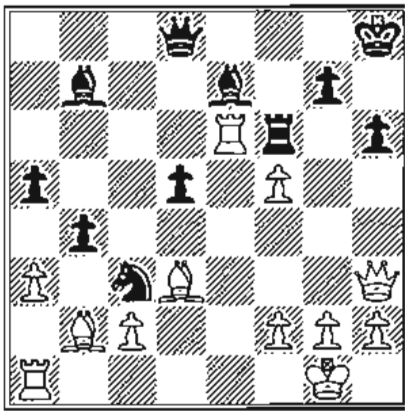
19...♖f6

19...♔g8 is crushed by 20 f6, revealing a discovered attack on h7.

20 ♖g4 ♜cc6

Black accepts the loss of the exchange which is tantamount to conceding defeat. Instead 20...♜f7 21 ♖h5 ♖f8 22 ♘e5 ♜f6 23 ♘g6+ ♜xg6 24 f×g6 is very good for White.

21 ♘xf6 ♜xf6 22 ♜fe1 h6 23 a3 a5 24 ♜e6



Voigt is clearly on top and is now seeking exchanges so he can eventually convert his material advantage into victory.

24...♘c8 25 ♜xf6 ♘xf6 26 axb4 ♖b6

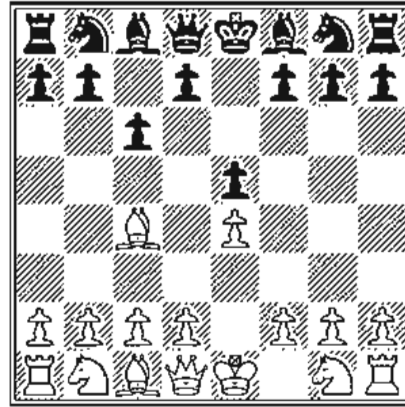
If 26...axb4 then 27 ♜a8 when the pin along the back rank is decisive.

27 ♜e1 ♖xb4 28 ♜e8+ ♔h7 29 ♖h5 1-0

I think the best try for Black amongst the unusual moves is 2...c6 – and I have managed to track down a game played by a couple of top grandmasters.

Fedorov – Mamedyarov
Moscow 2004

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c4 c6!?



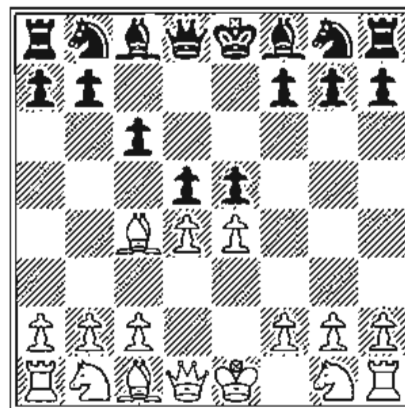
3 d4!

White wants to exploit Black's inaccurate move order. 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 d3 d5 transposes to Paulsen's Defence.

3...♘f6?!

This move has a poor reputation but for a strong grandmaster there is always time to revive an old line.

a) 3...d5 is the consistent approach:

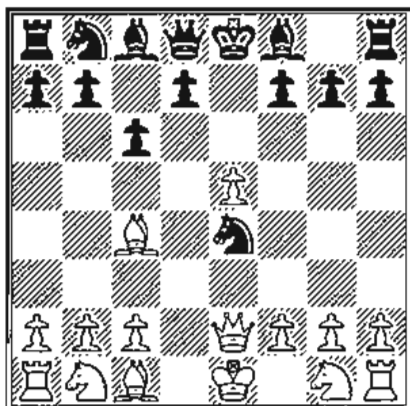


4 ♘b3 d×e4 allows 5 ♖h5!? ♖f6 6 d×e5 ♖f5 7 ♖xf5 ♘xf5 8 ♘e2 ♘d7 9 ♘g3 ♘e7 (9...♘g6 10 h4 h5

11 ♖f4 is roughly equal) 10 ♘c3 ♗xe5 11 ♗cxe4 0-0-0 12 f4 gave White the superior ending in Bryson-Motwani, Stirling 2002.

b) 4 exd5 has the merit of creating an isolated d-pawn: 4...cxd5 5 ♖b5+ ♗d7 6 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 7 dxe5 ♗xe5 8 ♗e2 (this is a safe option for White who will have a long-term task of undermining the isolated d-pawn) 8...♗f6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♗bc3 with an edge according to Keres.

4 dxe5 ♗xe4 5 ♖e2!



White acts promptly to make sure the knight retreats to an awkward looking square. The key is that 5...d5 6 exd6 or 5...f5 6 exf6 is good for White because the knight will be pinned to the king.

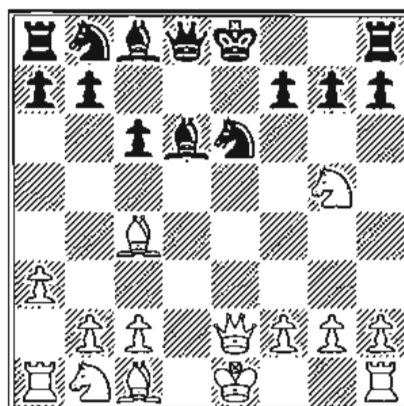
5...♗c5 6 a3!?

The idea is to offer the bishop an escape square to save it from being exchanged. Instead 6 ♗f3 allows Black to trade pieces upon 6...b5 7 ♖b3 ♗xb3 8 axb3 when 8...♗e7 is roughly equal.

6...d5 7 exd6+ ♗e6

The obvious reply 7...♗e6? falls victim to 8 b4 when Black is busted.

8 ♗f3 ♖xd6 9 ♗g5!



White steps up the pressure on the e6 knight.

9...♖e7

If 9...0-0 White can grab the offered pawn with 10 ♖xe6 fxe6 11 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 12 ♖xe6+ ♗h8 13 ♖e3 ♖e8 14 ♖b3 whereupon Black is struggling to justify the pawn sacrifice.

10 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 11 ♖xe6 fxe6

11...♖xe6 12 ♖xe6+ fxe6 13 ♗d2 is a long-term nightmare for Black who will constantly have to defend the weak, isolated e-pawn.

12 ♗d2 0-0 13 ♗e4 ♖e5 14 ♖g5

White gains time by attacking the queen and prepares to castle queenside.

14...♖f7 15 0-0-0 ♗d7 16 ♖b1 h6!? 17 ♖h4 ♖c7 18 ♗d6!?

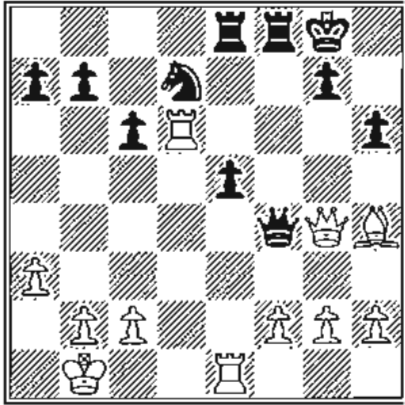
Instead 18 ♖g3 is an interesting idea to exchange the dark-squared bishops in order that the knight may occupy d6.

18...♖xd6 19 ♖xd6 ♖ae8 20 ♖e1

Fedorov continues to apply pressure on the e6 pawn leaving Black with a dull defensive task.

20...e5 21 ♖g4 ♗f4

21...♘c5? runs into 22 ♜xh6 winning a pawn for nothing.



22 ♜e4?!

This simplifies the position, allowing Black to claim equality. I prefer 22 ♗xf4 when 22...♜xf4 23 ♙g3 ♜f7 24 f3 is a great position for White who is still exerting pressure on the weak e-pawn.

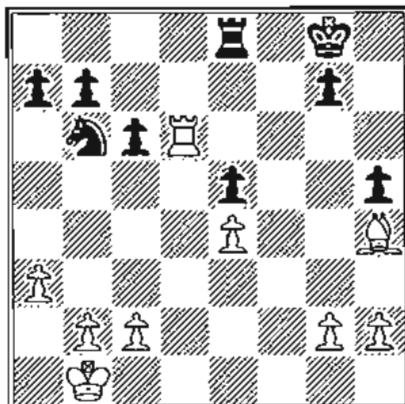
22...♗xg4 23 ♜xg4 h5! 24 ♜a4

Or 24 ♜g3 ♘c5 25 ♜e3 ♜f4 26 ♙g3 ♘e4! 27 ♜d7 ♘xg3 28 hxg3 ♜f7 29 ♜xf7 ♗xf7 30 ♜e4 which leads to a draw.

24...♘b6! 25 ♜e4

The game would be ruined by 25 ♜xa7? allowing the knight fork 25...♘c8.

25...♜f4 26 f3 ♜xe4 27 fxe4



The difference compared to ten moves ago is that Black no longer has to worry about his isolated e-pawn.

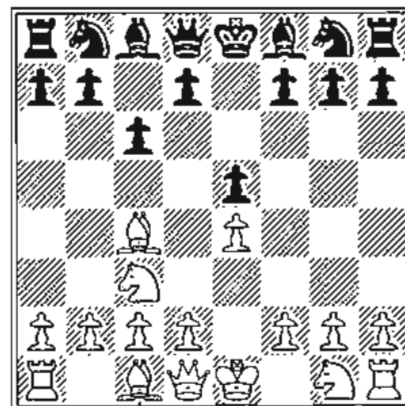
The game concluded:

27...♗f7 28 b3 ♜e6 29 ♜d2 ♜g6 30 h3 ♗e6 31 c4 ♘d7 32 b4 ♘f6 33 ♜e2 ♜h6 34 ♗c2 ♜h8 35 ♜e3 ♜g8 36 ♙g5 ♜d8 37 ♜d3 ♜g8 38 ♙xf6 gxf6 39 g3 f5 40 exf5+ ♗xf5 41 a4 ♜g7 42 b5 e4 43 ♜d8 ♜xg3 44 ♜d7 cxb5 45 axb5 b6 46 ♜xa7 ♗e5 47 ♜b7 ♜g6 48 ♗c3 ♜e6 49 ♜f7 h4 50 ♗d2 ♗d4 51 ♜h7 ♗xc4 52 ♜xh4 ♗xb5 53 ♜h8 ♗b4 54 h4 e3+ 55 ♗e2 b5 56 h5 ♗b3 57 ♜g8 ♜e5 58 h6 ♜h5 59 ♜h8 ♜h3 60 h7 b4 61 ♗d3 ♜h6 62 ♗xe3 ♜e6+ 63 ♗f4 ♜e7 64 ♗g5 ♜b7 1/2-1/2

It is also possible to cope with 2...c6 by playing 3 ♘c3 with lines similar to the Vienna.

Rogers - B.Jones
Sydney 1996

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 c6 3 ♘c3



This set-up featuring a knight on c3 would appeal to those who favour a Vienna set-up.

3...d6

A modest set-up that delays the usual central pawn advance and relies instead on steady development.

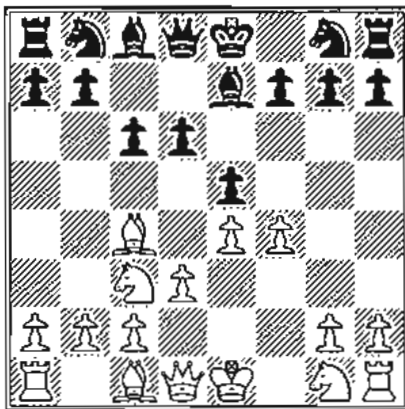
Also possible are:

a) 3...♘f6 4 d4 d5 5 exd5 cxd5 6 dxe5 (6 ♖b5+ ♙d7 7 ♜e2?! e4 is equal, Pengelley-Stawski, Gold Coast 2003) 6...dxc4 7 ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 8 exf6 ♙e6?! (8...gxf6 9 ♙f4, intending to castle queenside, ensures White the initiative) 9 fxg7 ♙xg7 10 ♖ge2 a6 11 ♙e3 gave White a superior ending thanks to the extra pawn, Kuipers-Dieperink, Vlissingen 1998.

b) 3...♙d6 is a fun idea where Black wants to drop the bishop back to c7 and then find the right time to play ...d7-d5. I found a reference to it – the game Conway-Philidor, London 1790, where instead of the tame 4 d3 White should play 4 d4 with advantage.

c) 3...♙b4 4 ♘f3 (4 d3?! is met by 4...d5 with a slight advantage) 4...d6 5 d4 ♜a5 6 ♜d3 ♘f6 7 ♙d2 0-0 8 a3 gave White an edge in Mitkov-Arencibia, Ponferrada 1997.

4 d3 ♙e7 5 f4



This should be a standard idea for White because the advance of the f-pawn is part of the strategy when the Vienna set-up is employed in the Bishop's Opening.

5...♘d7 6 ♘f3 b5 7 ♙b3 b4 8 ♘a4

The knight looks temporarily out of the action on the edge of the board but the plus side is that ...♘c5, to exchange the bishop on b3, is now foiled by ♘xc5 trading knights.

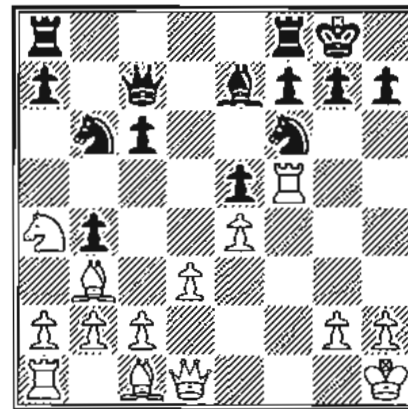
8...♘gf6 9 0-0 0-0 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 ♙h1

A waiting move which at least rules out annoying future checks on the g1-a7 diagonal.

11...♜c7 12 ♘h4!

The king's knight heads for the influential f5-square where it will be useful in promoting an attack.

12...♘b6 13 ♘f5 ♙xf5 14 ♜xf5



Black has managed to exchange the knight but at least White now has the easy plan of doubling rooks on the f-file and finding a way to snare the e5 pawn.

14...♘xa4 15 ♙xa4 ♘e8 16 ♙b3

The long-term target is the f7 pawn. It is significant that Black has no counterplay and is merely responding to events rather than instigating them.

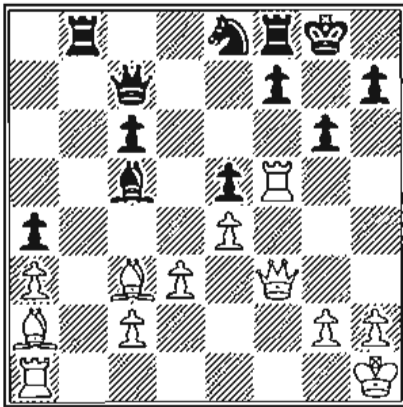
16...a5 17 a4 bxa3 18 bxa3 a4 19 ♖a2 ♜b8 20 ♜f3

The queen moves to the kingside in order to add weight to the pressure on the f7 pawn.

20...♗c5

20...♗d6! looks like an improvement due to 21 ♜xe5 (21 ♜h5 is probably best to keep his options open although after 21...♜a5 Black is fine) 21...♗f6 22 ♗f4 ♜d7 with roughly equal chances.

21 ♗d2 g6 22 ♗c3!



A neat move to force Black to come up with something against a robust attacking strategy.

22...♗d4

22...gxf5 fails to 23 ♜g3+ ♗g7 24 ♗xe5 winning.

23 ♗xd4 exd4 24 ♜f4

White's advantage is based on having an easy plan of targeting the f7 pawn.

24...♜b7 25 ♜f1 ♔g7

If 25...♗d6 then 26 e5 ♗f5 27 e6! leaves Black struggling to contain the onslaught.

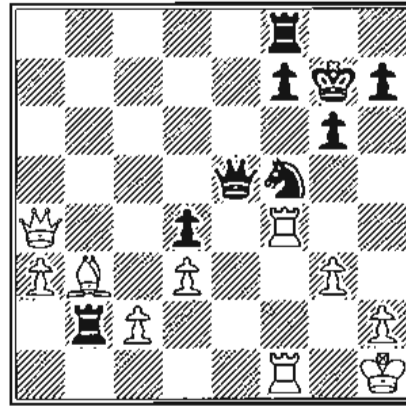
26 e5 ♜xe5

It is not possible for Black to take time out with 26...♜a7 because 27 ♜e4 c5 allows 28 ♜xf7+ winning.

27 ♜xc6 ♗d6 28 ♜xa4

Rogers is now a pawn up and is giving the d4 pawn close attention.

28...♜b2 29 g3 ♗f5 30 ♗b3!



The rook on b2 is locked out of the game so the result of the ending is never in doubt.

30...h5 31 ♜c6 ♜b8 32 ♜e4 ♜f6 33 ♜xf6+ ♔xf6 34 ♜xd4 ♔g5 35 ♜e4 f6 36 a4 h4 37 g4 ♗h6 38 ♜g1 h3 39 a5 ♜8xb3 40 cxb3 ♜xb3 41 ♜a4 1-0

Conclusion

It is obvious from the game Fisher-Steinitz that an unusual reply should be respected because the attempt an outright refutation fails spectacularly. A calmer response with 3 d3 is explored in Fryer-Lyell and White soon gains an advantage. The romantic era of chess would

welcome the sight of 2...b5 but nowadays it merely looks like a loss of a pawn for nothing. The game Voigt-Sell is an example of how White should conduct the opening. The heavyweight encounter Fedorov-Mamedyarov looks at 2...c6 which is the best of the

unusual alternatives. White starts energetically but tough resistance by Black eventually results in a draw. The game Rogers-Jones sees a different approach with White adopting a Vienna set-up which allows him to seize the initiative from the opening.

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